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ABSTRACT

These 31 papers dealing with adult aboriginal learning are divided into three sections. The keynote speakers' papers appear first in each section. Section 1, Learning Our Way, contains these papers: "The Invasion of Aboriginal Education" (Christie); "The Drover's Daughter" (Bedford); "Nyungar Women Returning to Education" (Bennell); "Learning Patterns of the Songwriter's Workshop" (Borneman); "Nyungar Language Project" (Calgaret et al.); "Aboriginal Knowledge: Does It Count?" (Crawford); "A Practical Lesson" (Hayward); "Teaching Reading to Aboriginal Adults from Traditional Communities" (Langlands); "Karrayili (Bayulu)" (Lennard); "'Learning Our Way: Coonana Womens' Group' Coonana Aboriginal Community" (Nudding); "Language Programmes for Tradition or for Today?" (Thieberger); and "Empowerment through Learning from a Black Perspective" (Yavu-Kama). Section 2, Our Community Identity and Our Community Soul, consists of: "Aboriginal Adult Education" (Valadian); "An Aspect of Nyoongah World View of Knowledge" (Irrluma); "Even Desert Kids Need Heroes" (Capp); "Tranby College" (Flick); "Aboriginal Education and Training at the Crossroads--Reproducing the Present or Choosing the Future?" (Folds, Marika); "A Case for a National Network about Enclaves" (Hayward); "Aboriginal Ranger Training" (McGlew); "Living a New Way: A Case Study in Community Self-Management" (McMahon, Kogolo); and "Aboriginal Participation in Higher Education--Policies and Practices" (Riley-Mundine). Section 3, Two Way Learning, contains: "'Coming Up Level' without 'Losing Themselves': The Dilemma of Formal Tertiary Training for Aborigines" (Harris); "Legal Control, Learning, and the Aboriginal Struggle for Law" (Broadhurst); "Learning as an Adult" (Carlisle, McGillivray); "External Pre-tertiary Courses for Aboriginal Adults in the Western Australia College of Advanced Education" (Hubble et al.); "Psychological Testing for Intelligence and for Employment" (Kearins); "The Development of Literacy Skills and Competencies for Aboriginal Adults: Some Issues" (Procter); "The Aboriginal Education Unit, Department of Technical and Further Education" (Thorne et al.); "Aborigines Learning to Translate" (Kilham, Richards); "Left or Right Brain: Is There a Neurological Relationship to Traditional Aboriginal Learning Styles?" (Sayers); and "Whose Ideology?: Adult Aboriginal Attitudes to Education on the Carnarvon Aboriginal Reserve" (Saggers, Gray). The conference program is appended. (YLB)

PAPERS FROM THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADULT ABORIGINAL LEARNING
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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"LEARNING MY WAY"

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Compiled by
Barbara Harvey and Suzanne McGinty

A SPECIAL EDITION OF

Wikaru 16

FROM THE INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED ABORIGINAL STUDIES

LEARNING MY WAY

PAPERS FROM THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADULT ABORIGINAL LEARNING

Held at Mount Lawley Campus
of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
September, 1988

Compiled by
BARBARA HARVEY and SUZANNE McGINTY

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FOREWORD

The National Conference 'Learning My Way' has made a significant contribution to the promotion of issues concerning Aboriginal adult learning styles. Staff at the Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education co-ordinated the input. They were responsible for taking ideas beyond the embryonic stage and shaping these into a conference format.

Aboriginal participation was very strong at the conference. It was gratifying to find that Aboriginal people made up seventy percent of the five hundred in attendance. Also it is important to point out, that of the eight five papers presented, seventy three percent came from Aboriginal contributors.

Most importantly this conference was structured so that everyone had a chance to have their say. Moreover it was crucial for Aboriginal people to put forward what was important to them and to say this in an atmosphere free of academic formality.

This collection then is a joint venture between the Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies and the Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies. It stands in place of what would have been the 1988 edition of the Institute's Journal 'Wikaru'.

This book deserves a wide audience and I thank all the contributors and others. To those people inside and outside of Australia who were not exposed to the conference proceedings, this book will provide you with a measure of the strength and direction in which Aboriginal Australians are moving. So it gives me great pleasure to recommend 'Learning My Way' as a means of keeping the voices alive.

Baban

TOM BABAN
Head
Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies
Western Australian College of Advanced Education
Perth, Western Australia

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Conference was convened by:
The Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education
The Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the Western Australian College of Advanced Education
The Western Australian Aboriginal Language Association
Western Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

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Liam Jones, (WACAE student)
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Middar Dance Group.

Photos by Peter Reynolds

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I AM THE BLACK CHILD

I am the black child
All the world waits for my coming
All the earth watches with interest
To see what I shall become
Civilization, hangs in the balance
What I am
The world of tomorrow will be

I am the black child
You have brought me into this world
About which I know nothing
You hold in your hand my destiny
You determine whether I shall
Whether I shall succeed or fail
Give me a world where I can walk tall
Where I can walk tall and proud

Train me to love myself
Train me to love my people
Train me to be a nation
Train me to be myself

(Conference theme song)
Words by author unknown
Music by Cheri D. Yavu Kama
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Stephen Harris

Group session

Darryl Kickett

Shirley Bennell

Photos by Liam Jones

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INTRODUCTION

The **Learning My Way** Conference (1988) arose out of a groundswell of feeling that the time had come for a meeting where there could be a lot of talking and a lot of listening about adult Aboriginal learning. As the conference idea generated it became evident that there would be enormous value in the conference having a national rather than a local perspective. From all over Australia the word came in that Aboriginal people were interested in expressing their views, their experiences and further developing their own perspectives and programmes.

We were fortunate in the contributions made by our keynote speakers. We were fortunate too, in the many other people who were willing to speak to the conference through papers and workshop sessions. Over eighty such presentations were made and more than seventy percent of these were made by Aboriginal people.

During the conference a call was made for those who would like to have their papers considered for publication to submit them to us and thirty five such papers were received. We want to express our thanks to all those who responded in this way. The quality of the papers received made our task of compiling a book both an inspiring and a difficult one: inspiring because of the challenging and thought provoking nature of the papers: difficult because we were limited by the number of papers that could be included. The choices we made follow this introduction and we believe that they are such as will make a real contribution in the area of adult Aboriginal learning.

We did not see our role as that of editing the works that were submitted and, with very few exceptions, papers are presented exactly in the form in which they were received. Some papers will no doubt prove to be controversial and, if so, such discussion will be a further profitable outcome of the conference.

It may be worth noting here that no paper should be seen as a definitive statement of the conference: each one is a contribution towards the overall discussion. The variety of both content and approach in these papers is an honest expression of the conference itself and of the area of Adult Aboriginal Learning in general.

As the conference proceeded, it became clear that the planners' vision of Aboriginal people 'learning' in a special 'way' was a concept that people really believed in. Papers and discussions pointed to the important issue of Aboriginal people working within their own learning frameworks with styles and issues and outcomes that they could own. Yet the point was made many times that it could never be a 'learning **my** way', but rather a 'learning **our** way'. Family and communal involvement superseded an individual sense of aspiration.

Balanced with this was the acceptance of the fact that Aboriginal people live in a multicultural Australia. Many want to participate in mainstream education and employment. The acceptance of Government funding was believed by some, to be the way of developing their communities' resources and achieving equity within our society. Others felt the time had come to move away from Government control and tap into different sources of revenue. There was consensus in not wanting to jeopardise the culture, the way of life and the identity of Aboriginal people.

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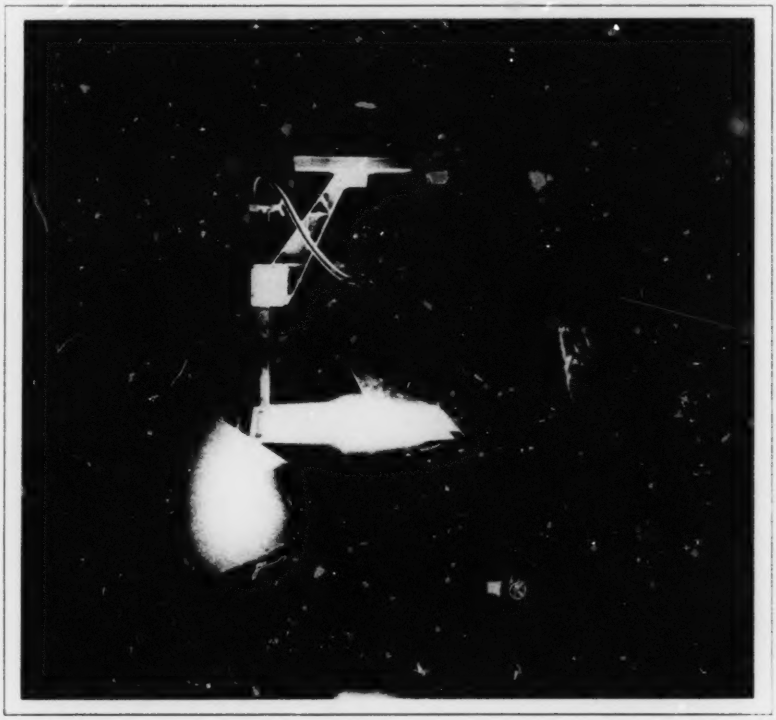
The idea of 'empowerment' was a forceful issue for many people. To operate effectively and have knowledge of two worlds, education and training are needed. The concept of knowledge was discussed in several philosophical papers, some of which are reproduced here. The emergence of 'black' writings on the issues is perhaps one of the highlights of this book. One woman spoke of the Aboriginal consciousness which pervades all thoughts and actions, a stance which has its roots deep in personal and social history. This theme was reflected in several papers, hence the title 'Our Community Identity and Our Community Soul'.

The keynote speakers' papers have been used as the first chapter for each section of the book. The other papers were then grouped under one of the three sections. While there was some similarity between the papers thus grouped, themes and issues were numerous and varied and each paper has been placed in its own right.

This conference has been a springboard for ideas, discussions and friendships. We hope this book will further consolidate what has begun.

BARBARA HARVEY
SUE McGINTY
Perth, November, 1988



Rose Murray

Photo by Liam Jones

SECTION ONE
LEARNING OUR WAY

Well . . .

Yes.

"Right on!" *Shirley Bennell*

Photos by Liam Jones.

Chapter 1

THE INVASION OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

*by Michael Christie**

The theme of this conference is 'learning my way'. If we are to understand what is really meant by learning the Aboriginal way, we must get quite clear in our minds that all Aboriginal people have always had, and continue to have a viable system of Aboriginal education within their own culture. Aboriginal people all over Australia continue to teach their children the precious understandings and relationships which give Aboriginal people their identity. This traditional Aboriginal education has been, and continues to be invaded and colonized by white ideas of schooling which are usually more destructive of Aboriginal identity than supportive of it.

Aboriginal people are quite conscious of the way in which white education crushes and devalues their Aboriginality, although they may not vocalise their anger and frustration in ways which white Australians might clearly understand. The principal stumbling block to effectiveness in Aboriginal formal education is the refusal or inability of whites to listen, think about or act upon the demands Aboriginal people are making for their formal education.

In writing this paper, then I focused on clarifying to myself the demands which I feel Aboriginal people are consistently raising in regard to formal education, and which white educators including myself, seem unable to act upon.

This then is not a theoretical or academic paper so much as a personal reflection derived specifically from the work I am doing so I should give a short account of my involvement in the white schooling side of Aboriginal education.

I arrived in Australia in 1972 and went as a teacher to Milingimbi, an island off the remote coast of Arnhemland. During my years at Milingimbi, I lived with Milingimbi yolngu, spent much time learning to communicate in a local dialect, and worked mostly as teacher linguist in the bilingual school.

In 1980 I moved to Brisbane for five years and spent some time working with and living next door to Queensland Murries. In 1987 I returned to Northeast Arnhemland to Yirrkala, to another group of yolngu speaking related dialects. The Yirrkala Community School where I work is under Aboriginal control. A School council makes long term decisions concerning the development of the school, and the day to day decisions are under the control of the Aboriginal principal in conjunction with Yolngu Action Group which is made up of all the Aboriginal workers in the school.

My work is in the Literature Production Centre alongside two Aboriginal literacy workers. Together we work on the community newspaper, the production of literature in a number of the local dialects and helping where asked in classrooms and workshops.

MICHAEL CHRISTIE, Box 896, Nhulunbuy N.T. 0881

* Michael Christie was sponsored by The Wesley Foundation for Research into Literacy

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Some of the examples I want to use concern workshops in the school, and the ways in which my co-workers are teaching me about Aboriginal education.

Slowly Aboriginal people are becoming more recognized in their resistance to the invasive aspects of Western education. They have always made clear in their own ways the terms under which they will accept what schooling has to offer; their much more difficult task is to persuade the whites to stop and learn about what their world view has to say, what they want from formal education, and what learning their way really means. I have here five points. I would like to be able to say that these points represent what Aborigines are demanding from the white education system, but all I can really say is that this is my personal Anglo-saxon perspective on what I feel is being said to me.

My comments are addressed mostly to white educators who are trying to work out what learning the Aboriginal way entails, but I hope my comments will be of interest to Aboriginal educators who may use them to compare with their own understandings of the contrasts between the two different modes of education.

In this paper, when I say Aboriginal education, I mean what it is that Aboriginal children learn from their own Aboriginal world. When I say formal education, or school education I mean what we are trying to do through government sponsored schools and colleges. These are what I see as the five major demands of Aboriginal people for their own education:

1. *In genuine Aboriginal education, our first and most basic educational goal is to teach the harmony and unity of Aboriginal life. Any focus on individual achievement which ignores the meaningfulness of the Aboriginal group is unacceptable.*

   Before we can look effectively at what 'learning my way' really means to Aboriginal people, we white educators must first begin to develop in our minds a clear picture of what learning the white way entails. We can then start to work out by contrast, the assumptions which underlie the two different ways of going about things.

   If it is true the basic goal of Aboriginal education is to preserve the harmony and unity of Aboriginal life, then the first fundamental mistake we as white educators make about Aboriginal education is the assumption that Aboriginal students are studying purely to learn. I feel that, in a very important sense, this is not the case. In my experience, the fundamental motivation of Aboriginal students of all ages, is to explore, consolidate and live out their Aboriginal identity, and this to them, must be a group experience. Individual learning in formal education may help with this, but very often it may hinder, and Aboriginal students are quick to pick out the learning circumstances which will help them fulfil their goals of Aboriginal harmony and unity. When white educators find students reluctant to learn, we too quickly conclude that they are unmotivated or lazy. We must ourselves learn what it is for each group of Aboriginal learners that will may education a unifying, consolidating experience, and learn to use these as yardsticks to evaluate our programmes.

No matter how exciting, up to date, or supposedly relevant our teaching is, it will be rejected by Aboriginal learners if it requires them to compromise their most fundamental goal of developing and maintaining unity.

All teachers know that white teaching practices which make Aboriginal learners *stand out as high achievers in* contrast to the group will not work. But in the same way that individual learners flatly refuse to participate in classroom activities that will make them seem to be in competition with their classmates, so also do *groups* of learners refuse to commit themselves to particular *systems* or *programmes* or *ideas* in education for the same reason.

A quick example: during National Aboriginal week last year, the children at our school sat around hot and listless in the classrooms while their white teachers complained of their unwillingness to work. Then the Action Group decided that a big bush shelter must be built for the Open Day to be held on Friday. Almost instantaneously the school exploded into activity, with the children chopping, sawing, carting stones, shovelling and raking sand and digging up saplings in the heat. Everyone was happy, the children worked like slaves, the yolngu teachers joined in proudly, and the white teachers stood back amazed. They couldn't understand the change that had come over the children, and somehow felt piqued that the children wouldn't bring the same industriousness to their classroom tasks. Some of the white teachers wrongly assumed that the children hate writing but love digging. This is not the case at all. They only hate activities directed at their personal learning and development, and love those directed at group unity.

As white educators we have been powerfully oversocialized by formal education, so we wrongly assume that sound academic learning is somehow going to be intrinsically motivating for Aboriginal students, because it is for us. But Aboriginal people have more important business to be going on with, that is, discovering together and living out their Aboriginal identity. And if we respect their right to education on their own terms, we will do well to start by learning about the harmony and unity which motivates them much more powerfully than learning.

In my own experience, my failure to do this has made things very difficult for my Aboriginal co workers. Part of my work at present is to do with the Yirrkala community newspaper. At our first meeting, I had only two suggestions about what we should include — that the newspaper should contain new ideas for people to think and talk about, and that we should present a bit of controversial material to make people generally more aware of all the prickly political issues which regularly crop up in the community. These two points were accepted agreeably by the Yolngu editor, and I spent much time searching around for the new and the controversial for us to include. It took several issues of the newspaper for me to realise that any news which was potentially controversial the editor would actually take away and discuss and disseminate and get some general agreement before she finally wrote it. The other literacy worker, in fact deliberately chooses the most widely known and to me, most mundane items to write up. By the time each copy comes out, it is usually purged of everything new and controversial and, from the yolngu point, becomes a good newspaper because it keeps everyone together.

As I see it, much of what Aboriginal people see as gratuitous pushiness and manipulation in white educators comes from our misguided presumptions about white learning goals having priority over Aboriginal identity goals. Our failure as white educators to fully appreciate this principle leads us to commit one of our most serious errors, that is to structure our teaching programmes in terms of the learning goals we have in mind. When one man first came to work in the Literature Centre, he was barely literate, but wanted to work with us. We had a few long talks about what he wanted to do. Looking back I can see now that I cajoled him into agreeing to focus on a number of general goals, like developing his vernacular literacy skills, learning the computer, and making the first ever literature in his own Yirritja clan dialect. He had a tape of a traditional story, and wanted to make a book out of it. As time went on, he fitted pretty happily into the Literature Centre; the only cause of tension was when I became agitated that he was wandering around all day, talking on the telephone, and, as I saw it, getting involved in very unproductive activities, while getting quite bogged down on the work on his own book, sometimes not touching it for a couple of weeks. I knew it was a difficult task, but also knew he was very capable of doing it. When I asked him about it, he told me firmly that he wanted to do this job slowly.

In the end, when the work had been at a standstill for a couple of months, I asked the senior literature worker's advice. She told me to leave it to her, and when he came in to work, she asked him for his transcription, sat down with it, went through it carefully herself, finished it off, made all the necessary corrections, and handed it back to him. He was delighted, she was delighted, all the yolngu were delighted, only I was disappointed because it hadn't been by any means the learning experience I had planned. But I learnt my lesson. His goal in working in the literature centre had had very little to do with the personal development of his literacy skills. His goals had been to be a meaningful presence of his Yirritja clan in the school team. It was still his story, other people would do for him the work which he was not yet ready to do, and now, months later he is quite literate in spite of rather than because of my efforts, and he is learning more about playing what he sees as an effective role in the work of the Centre. By his behaviour he had told me repeatedly that my focus on his learning goals was making it very difficult for him to go about his own goals for his work at school. The other yolngu in the school were similarly not nearly so interested in his productivity as they were in his fitting meaningfully into the ongoing life of the school.

By the time Aboriginal children arrive at preschool, they have already learnt their societal goal of unity. They are different from white children in that they are not treated as a separate species during childhood. They already know the acceptable circumstances under which they should cooperate with the teachers' efforts to teach them. They know to cooperate with any activity which consolidates their unity as a group, and resist their teachers' efforts to individualize them and draw them out from the group. Similarly, a child who refuses to speak up in class and make herself heard in distinction to everyone else, is choosing to pursue genuine and important Aboriginal goals. Furthermore, when these children decide to stay home and sit with their grandmother or play with their siblings instead of coming to school, it is because they realise that what school is offering at that particular time, is not leading to the fulfilment of these Aboriginal goals, whereas staying at home is.

One of the ways in which white education invades the unity of an Aboriginal group is by setting up systems which reward individuals on the basis of their behaviour or their achievement. For Aboriginal children, being happily part of a united group is the only reward they have learnt to look for, and the only reward they want. They are outraged by white teachers' presumption that they can reward and punish their students on the basis of what they see as their good and their bad performance. Even the youngest Aboriginal children can feel how the messages which white educators convey break down the old system of reward based on unity, and replaces them with rewards contingent on merit and achievement.

If any teacher sees this situation as somehow interfering with what s/he is trying to achieve, then in an important sense, what that teacher is trying to achieve is somehow tied up with the negation of what must be seen as a most fundamental focus of Aboriginal culture.

The second major demand which I feel Aboriginal people are making of white education is an extension of the same principle:

2. *As Aboriginal people, a basic educational goal is to preserve our continuity with the past, the land, and the people. Progress for its own sake is not our goal. We only want progress if it helps us to retain our Aboriginal identity.*

Most white educators can accept that there is a special Aboriginal way of looking at education. But most white educators have difficulty accepting that to look at education from an Aboriginal point of view requires completely revising our ideas of progress, and development. To whites, education, change, development and progress are almost synonymous. We somehow see the basic goal of education as change. Aboriginal people make it plain over and over again that the progress they are looking for is nothing more nor less than finding effective ways of maintaining their Aboriginal dignity and their special way of life in the face of ongoing white invasion. They are not looking for development for its own sake. They only want change if they can see it as directly assisting their struggle for cultural integrity and survival. In this sense, they are not looking for development, but for adjustment. They are looking to formal education for new ways to adjust their traditional Aboriginality in the face of accumulating and intensifying effects of white invasion. This struggle, I believe is just as difficult, if not more difficult, for urban and rural Aborigines, who are faced with a constant denial of their Aboriginality by whites who can't or won't see and accept it.

The Aboriginal struggle to make education serve the goals of stability and continuity in the face of the white preoccupation with learning and progress goes largely unnoticed by white educators. In my experience in education planning, Aboriginal ideas are often dismissed as too hard or irrelevant, because coming from the Aboriginal world of meaning they are broad and general ideas often connecting

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things which in white minds have no logical connection. White ideas are full of purpose, they are goal directed, they are tailored to fit neatly into the conceptual maze of formal education without reference to people, to personalities, to places or to the past. For a yolngu idea on education at Yirrkala to be given serious consideration, the whole school has to somehow stop, the whole depersonalized conceptual structure of schooling has to be suspended, the psychological baggage needs to be rearranged until it connects up those things that are connected in the Aboriginal world and places appropriate values on them, all this before the idea can even be considered.

The implementation of an Aboriginal educational idea will often require parallel changes to the fundamental structure of the system upon which Aboriginal schools continue to be based. White educators often lament that Aboriginal ideas are good and interesting if a little unrealistic, but we don't have the time or the resources to consider them carefully or implement them. We often have little time or motivation to learn more about these ideas, or to examine which of their own attitudes and practices are standing in the way of these ideas.

Thus the very progress-development orientation of western education tends to prevent even a foot in the door for the principles of Aboriginal traditional education.

One of the most destructive effects of the development vision of white education upon Aboriginal identity is that its assumptions can easily lead Aboriginal people to believe that their dreaming is a thing of the past, that there is no continuity between what the Aboriginal world was once, compared with what it is now, that there is a gap between the old way of life and the new way and that education concerns growing in the future, rather than preserving what is precious from the past.

It is as if as whites, our dreaming lies in the future. The mythology which underlies white education involves progress, change, making a better world, whereas the mythology which underlies Aboriginal education is tied with the past, with retaining rather than creating the better world.

In everyday classroom terms, we can work on this problem if we always remember that there is a constant Aboriginal meaning-building activity already at work in the group of learners. It is an activity of social interactions which constantly builds up in Aboriginal minds, the unity of the participants, as well as their unity with their families, their places, and their histories. We can evaluate our success in terms of the extent to which we support this activity. For white educators, this must involve becoming a learner.

Summing up, I think that all Aboriginal people I have met, both urban and remote, have one most fundamental goal — to preserve their Aboriginal identity above all other things. Of course they often do not see it specifically in these terms. Often to them it means all they want to do right now is stay on or return to their land or stay with or return to ones people. But these are all goals of preserving Aboriginality. If the educational programs we offer as adult educators are not attracting the interest we would hope for, then this is simply because the agenda we are expecting them to fulfil is seen to interfere with the paramount goal of preserving Aboriginal identity. If we blame our failures in "education" on unmotivated students, or lack of community support for "education", then we have missed this point altogether.

3. *The most fundamentally valued way of doing things in Aboriginal life is responsiveness to the total environment, physical and social. The preferred white approach of planning and control is the exact opposite of this, and in fact prevents it.*

Most of us, black and white, have a clear picture in our minds of what life was like for Aboriginal people before the invasion. We see it as groups of people all over Australia, living in a very close and finely tuned relationship with the land. This relationship was so close and responsive to the minute day-to-day changes in the environment, that Aboriginal people still tend not to claim that the land belongs to them, but rather that somehow, they belong to the land. It was such a close relationship that the rhythms of nature — the tides, the winds, the seasonal cycles of foods, plants and animals — were mirrored exactly by the behaviour of the people. Aboriginal people in north east Arnhemland pride themselves on their unique responsiveness to the environment, and one of the most beautiful aspects of their songs and stories is the way in which the people actually become the long white rain clouds, or the streams of flood water, or the crested terns diving for fish.

The urban Murries who were my neighbours in Brisbane, still showed exactly the same Aboriginal responsiveness. One weekend there would be twenty people staying in the house, then they would all suddenly leave and go up the coast fishing for a few days, or up to Cherbourg for a family gathering or a dance.

The point I am trying to emphasize is that when one's life is defined by a true harmony and responsiveness with nature, (that is both physical nature, and the social setting), then planning becomes irrelevant. In fact long term planning and timing are impediments, they interfere with the true business of Aboriginal life.

This is a horrifying prospect to white people in general, not the least because almost every aspect of white formal education encourages Aboriginal people to stop responding and start planning and controlling. At the same time, it may subtly teach them that their responsiveness is nothing but laziness and lethargy, and that it has nothing to do with traditional culture, and that even if it is a trace from a forgotten heritage, it is best forgotten since there is no meaningful continuity with the past, and education is all about getting ready for the future.

It is important then, that we accept that, in this sense, the timetable (which specifies in advance when things are to be done), and the curriculum (which specifies in advance what is to be done) are possibly the two major obstacles to meaningful Aboriginal control of education. But because planning and regulating together represent the very essence of the white world, these are the two things without which formal education would not exist.

If one invented an instrument devised to prevent people from learning a responsive approach to the world, one would have to call it a clock. And if one invented a system devised to keep Aboriginal initiatives out of education, one would have to call it a timetable.

This means that we must be very careful planning the timing and content of our educational work. We must become critically conscious of how our timing system interferes with Aboriginal learning, and we must appreciate that every time an Aboriginal student leaves home and walks into formal education, they must somehow suspend their special responsive way of dealing with learning and social behaviour.

What can we do to change this? First and foremost, Aboriginal students must be able to control the *pace* of their own academic learning. They can't give themselves over completely to study as white students can, without compromising their identity. Their first consideration must be the more fundamental business of constructing the ongoing meaning of their Aboriginal lives. They can allow learning to take place only in response to this.

However, it would be impossible for most of us to immediately ditch our timetables and curricula. And it is true that Aboriginal students will respond relatively happily to a timetable provided they are free to continue acting responsively to the social environment of the classroom. But we should accept two basic facts:

First, timetable and curriculum are *not* a necessary part of education, they are just a convenience for white educators because they help us to go about organising education in the same way as we go about organising the world. In that sense, they should be viewed by teachers of Aborigines as crutches to support our efforts until we can find more meaning oriented, responsive ways of going about our work.

Secondly, we must accept that, while we insist on timetable and curricula, we cannot hope for meaningful Aboriginal control of education. The rigours of timetable and curriculum are the first things white educators have to loosen their grip upon, in order to allow more meaningful Aboriginal control. If we as educators really appreciated the responsive nature of all genuine Aboriginal learning, we would quite naturally see new directions to investigate for making our provisions more relevant and meaningful.

In many Aboriginal communities, and Yirrkala is a good example, the school is the only institution which is completely out of step with the Aboriginal world. The white world is so controlled by planning and timing, that most white people have no understanding whatever of the responsiveness which determines and enriches Aboriginal lives.

When Aboriginal workers do not turn up for work, or class, whites almost automatically interpret this as meaning that they are not interested, or depressed, or lazy, or whatever. We seldom realise that work and schooling for most Aborigines means daily wresting themselves away from the meaningful responsive Aboriginal social environment which determines their identity and moving into another world of planning, purpose and control.

I believe this wrench from the home world to the white education world just as difficult, if not more difficult for urban Aboriginal people whose struggle to retain their identity is a constant daily battle and whose teachers often have no knowledge or interest or sympathy with contemporary urban Aboriginal culture.

When Aboriginal people do start to reclaim formal education for themselves, we can see the rhythms of Aboriginal life edging back in to re-establish the responsiveness of genuine Aboriginal education. At Yirrkala, the workshop system lends itself to this. We need to start thinking more in terms of: instead of having art/craft every Thursday afternoon for two hours have an intensive workshop for a week. If everyone is involved in the planning and organising, and everyone works and learns together, the Aboriginal meaningfulness of the activity is guaranteed. Aboriginal learners respond to it as to any traditional activity from a family gathering to a sacred ceremony. It is a social, unifying group experience first, and to the extent that that meaningfulness is achieved, it becomes a learning and growing experience. Increased literacy or numeracy, on an individual basis, is a by-product.

Another very important example of the crippling effect of our preoccupation with planning and content and our failure to acknowledge Aboriginal responsiveness, is our traditional western expectation of employment. In the years I have spent working in Aboriginal education, I have met many excellent Aboriginal teachers, but I have never met one who wishes or expects to be a school teacher for forty hours a week forty weeks a year for forty years. Such an intention, I suspect, would represent a major compromise of Aboriginal values. Yet in our educational administrations we can seldom organise ourselves to employ Aboriginal teachers in the way they want to be employed, which seems to me, by and large, to be in bursts of several months of hard teaching, followed by another period of several months where formal teaching is forgotten, and other maybe less tangible Aboriginal goals are pursued.

The same situation exists for most Aboriginal tertiary students I have worked with. Most were prepared to work hard on their education but found it impossibly difficult to be tied down to a specific schedule for learning and study because, unlike white students, they had to constantly balance off their studies with their more important work of creating and maintaining their Aboriginal identity.

Summing up, timetabling and curriculum planning have established in white education a tradition that learning should be drawn out, homogenized, consistent, and long term with all the rhythms and responsiveness ironed out. We have almost got our educational planning to the stage where we can take a five year old and tell what s/he will be studying and when, every school term for the next fifteen years. To Aboriginal people, that is like imprisonment. It is a denial of the very essence of Aboriginal responsiveness. Aboriginal people are telling us that moving around from place to place, from interest to interest, from commitment to commitment, from job to job, is an essential part of meaningful education.

4. *A truly responsive harmony with the world can only be achieved by teaching children personal independence from an early age. Independence is a precious value of Aboriginal life, and coercion and manipulation can have no place in Aboriginal education. Personal independence and unconditional acceptance of everyone go hand in hand.*

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The Aboriginal ethic of non-interference or of personal freedom is a strong one. In Aboriginal society, everyone must be allowed fundamental independence and everyone in the group must always be unconditionally accepted. It is a great joy for Aboriginal adults to watch the new generation grow up and learn personal freedom, caring for themselves and for others without having to embrace the white ethic of manipulating other people's behaviour. Some of the behaviours which Aboriginal parents encourage in their children would be frowned upon by most white parents because the Aboriginal ethic of independence runs directly against the white idea that children should be taught to obey and need to be disciplined for their own good.

When I 'taught' young yolngu children at Milingimbi, I learnt that it was unreasonable, (quite apart from being impossible) to expect Aboriginal children to obey me in the way that I would expect white children to do so. I knew it was unreasonable because I could see the way Aboriginal parents actually encouraged, quite subtly, their children's resistance to adult control, and subtly rewarded independent behaviour.

Similarly, I learnt not to withhold rewards like games and movies from children who had not been working well, because everyone including the parents made it very clear to me that I was accepted only to the extent that I ensured that everyone around me was unconditionally acceptable.

But I was alarmed, by the mid seventies, to find that the children were starting to take their independence a step further, and, within a few years the school daily attendance had dropped from nearly 100% to less than 50%. School has never been considered compulsory since. Looking back, I suspect that this was maybe the most significant mark of progress in Aboriginal education in all the years I have been working in Arnhemland. And, like the other significant developments, it is entirely an Aboriginal initiative and has been brought about in spite of, rather than because of the efforts of white educators. As their parents took control of their community councils, during the Whitlam years, the children silently took control of their own education. Of course some radical educators would argue that the same situation should be obtained for white children in white schools, but the white world has a lot to learn before we are ready for that sort of decision.

Aboriginal students of all ages and their communities know quite well that education can take place without any manipulation or coercion. However, the white model of education which depends upon curriculum and timetable, in doing so always depends on some degree of coercion before it can even run. And everywhere, this is a constant source of friction between parents and teachers.

If we refuse to accept that formal education is intrinsically invasive of traditional Aboriginal education, we will continue to become upset by what we see as an inherent contradiction between the parents on one hand saying that they want a good quality education for their kids, and on the other hand leaving it up to the kids whether they attend school or not. Of course there is no contradiction. As we grow to appreciate the depth and power of Aboriginal culture, we will grow to realise there can be no other way. The personal freedom of Aboriginal students to choose learning for themselves is the starting point. It has nothing to do with parental interest or community support. If we have empty classrooms, we can do nothing but look for new ways of providing education which in no way compromises all the Aboriginal identity building principles of freedom, independence, unity and self motivation.

The Aboriginal parents I know generally put forward a very definite idea about sending their children to school that would surprise most white teachers: that the teachers have been trusted to give their children a good education without compromising their Aboriginality, and that if the teachers can't organise a worthwhile and motivating classroom programme without pushing the children around, then the children should be welcome to walk out and return home to where something more constructive of Aboriginal identity is bound to be happening. Aboriginal parents accord their children much higher status than white parents or teachers do. It is not seen as a privilege for Aboriginal children to be able to go to school and learn. It is seen as a privilege for white people to be allowed to teach their children.

Many parents and students, of course, do not appreciate how nearly impossible it is for even the best teachers to have a socially meaningful classroom programme running for Aboriginal students within the confines of timetable and curriculum and with departmental expectations of what we should be doing. But that is our problem and will remain our problem until we learn that Aboriginal people are the only ones who can teach us to do our job properly. What angers the parents is that white teachers, instead of admitting they do not know how to appreciate and accommodate Aboriginal values in the classroom, will readily turn around and blame the students for stubbornness or laziness or smartness or their community for lack of support.

In the face of all this, I believe we are slowly becoming more effective in our educational programmes. This is because there are various ways in which Aboriginal people are increasingly able to dictate the conditions of learning. Recently I was told that some homeland centre schools had decided to introduce vernacular literacy and their teachers wanted to come in to Yirrkala for me to conduct a workshop to develop their own literacy skills. I sent out a circular asking how they would like me to organise it, and received the reply that they wanted it run like a R.A.T.E. workshop.

Only a general framework was developed before the teachers came in from their outstations, then the programme was negotiated by consensus, everyone working out their own goals. The teaching materials which I had laboriously prepared were inspected, some were chosen, most were rejected, and each teacher either alone or in a group, worked out how they wanted to go about fulfilling their goals. People worked individually or in small groups on their projects for short periods, and before tea break we would meet together and report back in a couple of sentences what progress we'd been making. Everyone involved wrote a journal for twenty minutes each day, recording what they had learnt, how they felt about it, and what they intended to do next. The whites who were present, visiting teachers and support staff for the homeland schools including myself, were all expected to learn and to record our progress. Everyone was delighted with the results. We had developed a great feeling of togetherness, and all our individual learnings were derived from this. The journals and the work, along with photographs and other bits and pieces were put together into a booklet which can be used for planning more workshops, and as a personal record for everyone about our work together.

As educators we must be constantly struggling to see our students' point of view on what they are doing. Aboriginal students of all ages know first that they must preserve their fundamental independence above all, and second that their acceptability as Aborigines has nothing whatsoever to do with what they either contribute to or learn from their schooling.

The responsiveness cherished through so many thousands of years of hunting and gathering is equally alive and evident as Aboriginal young people wander through formal education. They have already learnt from their parents and peers to demand first and foremost that their own essential freedom and autonomy be respected and preserved as they take what they feel they need from formal education and leave the rest.

What happens when the independence or personal worth of a student or group of Aboriginal students is threatened? They generally respect the independence of the educator, and instead of complaining or raising the issue, they vote with their feet. They have more important Aboriginal things to be going on with, and seldom worry too much that their teachers are condemning them for lack of motivation. They will come back when we as educators stop blaming the victims of our traditional white modes of education, and learn instead to blame the invasive assumptions of formal education which require us at every turn, to compromise Aboriginal independence, and to exult planning, progress, change, and development above continuity with the past.

5. *We Aborigines are learning on our terms what is most important to us as Aborigines. The white education system sometimes helps with this, and sometimes acts against it. We are carrying on with the job anyway, and those formal educators who want to help us must stop talking and start listening, stop teaching and start learning.*

To say that Aboriginal parents are not interested in education if they do not send their children to school, is like saying that white parents are not interested in peace if they don't send their children to join the army.

Aboriginal people know what they want for their own and their children's lives, but many have grave doubts as to whether the schools can really do anything to help them achieve those goals. They are mostly happy to entrust their children to us if the children are willing, and while we do our best, but they always insist (despite constant white efforts to the contrary), that this schooling has to be on Aboriginal terms.

While most white educators may accept that learning on Aboriginal terms is the only possible chance for meaningful Aboriginal education, we often don't understand these terms sufficiently to acknowledge that acceptance and implementation of the principles which I have tried to outline above, must represent a major compromise of white educational values. To what extent are we as white educators really prepared to put away our traditional views of education and curriculum and work actively for Aboriginal self determination?

Aboriginalization is a much used word nowadays. However, very often white educators talk as if Aboriginalization is something which needs to happen to the Aboriginal people involved in education. Aboriginal people do not need Aboriginalization. It is white educators who need to be Aboriginalized, white assumptions, white perspectives, white values, and white structures. If we as white educators can have any credibility in our support for Aboriginalization, then our major educational target will have to be ourselves.

In every Aboriginal educational institution where I have worked, the major stumbling block for meaningful development has been the reluctance of white educators to critically examine the invasive assumptions of formal education, and their refusal to acknowledge that they can learn anything important from Aboriginal people, their refusal to pay more than lip service to the aim of learning to speak and understand Aboriginal languages, and their assumption that learning about aspects of Aboriginal culture, tradition, social structures, belief systems, perspectives on the world, work, life, money, nature, commitment, power etc is just a fringe interest to be pursued in one's spare time. Quite simply, most white educators cannot commit themselves to the idea that they have anything really meaningful to learn from Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal people continue to accept this silently, they continue to vote with their feet, and they continue to wait for whites to stop talking and start listening.

Becoming a learner, learning from Aborigines, and changing our educational ideas, is a very bitter pill for most of us white educators to swallow, because it can mean that much of what we hold dear as teachers, our techniques, our status, our theories, our assumptions, our beliefs, our attitudes, our practices, the work we enjoy doing, and our comfortable jobs, can be rendered irrelevant.

If we define genuine Aboriginal education as the efforts undertaken by Aboriginal people to preserve, understand, explore and communicate their Aboriginal identity, we begin to have some idea of the meagre role which we as white educators can play in pro-Aboriginal education, and how this role is very much dependent on our own learning about who Aborigines are and what they are saying about the world. In the next few years, as this slowly dawns upon us, we will become more responsive to the growing Aboriginal demand for education which fosters the wider Australian Aboriginal identity. A crucial part of this, I feel, will be to develop programmes whereby Aboriginal teachers and student teachers from southern rural and urban areas are encouraged to spend as much time as they can teaching and doing teaching practice in remote Aboriginal centres such as those in the N.T., and vice versa.

If we see Aboriginal education as a systematic attempt at fostering and preserving Aboriginal identity, then who better to do it than Aboriginal teachers from other

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places who themselves are fighting and winning their own battles for their own dignity. I know that Aboriginal teachers from everywhere intuitively understand the 'problem' of Aboriginal education which even the best white teachers seldom do. And I have seen urban Aboriginal teachers more willing and able to learn from Arnhemland yolngu, and happy to spend all their time doing so. Who is the best qualified educator from a white point of view is not really a relevant consideration.

I read somewhere that Lilla Watson, a Murrie educator from Brisbane, said words to the effect of "if you're here to help me, then thankyou, but no thank you. I think you're wasting your time. If however, you see your experience of oppression and learning and freedom as somehow tied up with mine, then sit down and we can talk about it and maybe learn something together".

When white educators begin to learn from Aboriginal teachers, the way in which we learn is maybe even more important than what we learn. What we learn is something that will be very specific to the situation we are in. How we learn will influence the way we look at the world, and greatly improve the possibilities of Aboriginal people for meaningful control of education. When we learn meaningfully, we will ourselves learn in such a way as to promote unity, to appreciate continuity with the land and the past, and to respect that other learners need to be given their independence, and given respect and acceptance no matter what their ideas.

This means that we have to stop the ideological conflicts which we white educators have with each other, which we sometimes see as being crucial to progress in education, and which some of us may actually enjoy, but which ultimately disempower Aboriginal people. As long as white educators persist with ideological infighting, we will happily persist in our illusion that our white theories are crucial to Aboriginal education, and our mistaken belief that we have to sort out our theoretical differences before we can afford the time to stop and listen to our Aboriginal teachers.

Aboriginal communities all over Australia are in a state of siege. The invasion of the white culture is as strong now as ever. Educators are sitting in empty classrooms all over Australia concerned about Aboriginal development and cultural survival, but paralysed by the obvious irrelevance of almost everything formal education is trying to achieve. All around us we see the destruction of Aboriginal culture. Many whites, when we look at Aboriginal parents or relatives who will not or cannot interfere with their children, who drink excessively or sniff petrol, or are out all night wandering in the city, we see in their parents only laziness or uncaring. We can only think of manipulative, controlling, invasive solutions. This blinds us from seeing and sharing the immense grief borne by Aboriginal people throughout Australia where families are affected by the invasion of our culture. 'It's up to them to do something about it', is all we can say. To the whites, interference is the only solution. It is as if our motto is: those who don't interfere, don't care.

When we finally stop and think, we will see the destruction which our culture has brought. We will see that interference is the problem, not the solution. We will appreciate that white education is in some way the essence of the invasive aspects of our culture. And we may then hold off from our interventions and start thinking about what we are doing to the world, and who can teach us about where we are wrong and what is to be done.

Chapter 2

THE DROVER'S DAUGHTER

by Doreen Bedford

A life story — from life in the outback to tertiary graduate.

The conference organisers have titled this occasion: "Learning my way". We have come here to share some of these experiences each with the other.

It is universally recognised that the greatest teacher is life itself. We cannot gain enough from classroom situations alone. Without direct experience, these are sterile or at best jumping off points only contributing to the learning process. We might recognise two major areas in which learning takes place: Informally, from the bulldust, quagmires and flat tracks of life's experience and formally, by putting in our time within social educational situations.

To gain maximum skill and practise in learning are we not well advised to be fully observant to what life has to offer by being awake and alert, being mindful of and in each ever present moment with its variety of experience? When alert we find that useful opportunities to learn are ever with us, but usually aren't we sluggishly asleep and miss most of our chances? The opportunity to skilfully grow is most frequently lost. Wisdom learning is possible from clear thinking attention to the movement and change within the existence of our daily life.

To hold and staticly identify with our fixed views and opinions of the almost totally relative aspects of life is simply ignorant. This totally frustrates the open minded lateral thinking process from which wisdom arising can occur. Wisdom is not an accumulation of data and technical skills, all of which are of limited value, soon becoming obsolete within the constantly moving world of situations. Instead, the type of wisdom which will not date, will always be relevent with the passing of events, is developed through the cultivation of intuitive insight founded on clarity of thought, observation and reflection free of the "tunnel vision" which fixed views and opinions about all things, especially one's self image and identity impose.

If we can train ourselves to cultivate wisdom it becomes progressively easier to think, feel and act accurately and appropriately, spontaneously within each unpredictable present moment as it occurs, without reference to patterns of programming, habits, structured education or instincts previously installed in our minds at a time when the unique aspects of the present moment were as yet unborn and unknown.

During the kindergarten stage of life, which in my case may only now be gently departing and the process has certainly only just commenced, I have been engulfed in the shallow, superficial thought patterns and resultant actions within which mostly we spend our entire life span. The result of this is confusion, error, regret, anger, frustration, disappointment that we all know so well and falsely call the inevitable stress of life. We impose this lie upon ourselves because of our image/identity ego-conceit, and our lazy thinking habits. We would far prefer to be entertained by external stimuli:

DOREEN BEDFORD, 66 Sturtridge Road, Lockridge, W.A. 6054

greed for food, fashion, music, dance, possessions, travel, television, movies, sex or whatever else provides distraction and fills the time, providing escape from the effort and reward of looking within to come to know ourselves and our true relationship with all else. We sidestep the cultivation of wisdom and rely on formal and informal established mechanical habits to get us by but they fail us. Our lives are erratic with discontents and short lived highs from temporary fixes. We have no stability or peace based on wisdom.

My experience, which I share with all of you and you may recognise as not so different from your own, has been that I believed the world in which we exist to be a sequence of fixed points, which could be examined, conquered and possessed. With each little illusionary conquest my delusionary and destructive ego-conceit grew, rewarding me with yet more delusion leading to a subconscious discontent and dissatisfaction. The harder I worked to solve the problems in this unskilful direction the worse the problems became. "Catch 22". In my ignorance I even missused my formal education to reinforce this attitude. Are there any here today who have not done the same? I believed in belief and had not yet heard the wise dictum: "Where belief starts, reason ends." For me it is now time to examine the wisdom of another dictum which advises: "Beware of all fixed views and opinions" though as yet I cannot avoid all of mine, am simply working on them and commend these concepts for your reflection.

The purpose of this paper is to propose to you what many of you will have heard elsewhere, that when the educational process becomes stereotyped or institutionalised, either or both internally or externally, we are travelling backwards and imprisoning ourselves in both concept and fixed attitudes which ignore the real truth of the flux state of this world, and our place in it. I will propose to you that wisdom development is not only possible, but the only development of any final and lasting value and that it is achieved by observation and introspection. There is no short cut to wisdom. Though wise and mature people, if we can find any, may point in its direction, we cannot learn it from others. No one other than ourselves, in this world or out of it, can save us from our own ignorance and its unfortunate consequences. We must do the work ourselves, accept total responsibility for our own lives.

It is not my intention to throw stones at the "sacred cows" of this world's institutions whether they be education systems, social mores, Aboriginal (or other) cultural identities, customs or ideology but simply to invite you today, and at other later times, to reflect upon the conceivable trap of fixed views, and whether possessing them is adding to or detracting from the value of your own life experience.

This paper invites you to consider the proposition, that our pre-occupation and obsession with wordly material and conceptual concerns form strong attachments which undermine our effectiveness and defeat our peace of mind. That attachment is diametrically opposed to wisdom and brings us from masked unacknowledged sources, inner suffering which we then share with and impose upon others. Should we come to recognise the natural continuous fluctuations of everything in this world, from an atom to a thought, and that our own situation, our bodies, social situations, thoughts and all else are the same and nothing fundamentally unique, only then can we come to be comfortable with the world and our place in it.

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This is the learning process upon which this paper is focussed and I will expand the thesis with a few anecdotes of episodes from my own life experience which illustrate where, because of my firmly entrenched small, narrow, parochial and blind state of mind, I have, like most others, encouraged the fool within. I suggest that such childish foolishness is a curable condition if we are able and willing to put in sufficient effort.

Like many persons of Aboriginal and part Aboriginal descent my early childhood was spent in a remote outback area within a small community. In retrospect, I see it was not so very different in its restricted vista from small stature, as that experienced by small children growing within other limited cultural parameters in any other place in this world. Inevitably I was exposed to the well intended cultural, ethnic and social indoctrination of my family and society which taught all they knew as best they knew how. As a small child, travelling as part of the camp following baggage of the droving plant, my mother encouraged and cultivated my first taste of literary appetite by reading aloud from magazines and books. She, who in her youth had gained her own literary start at the now defunct Moola Bulla government settlement, was obviously aware of the child psychology espoused today in the urging: "Have you read to your child today?" and considered a modern thought.

Simultaneously to all non Aboriginal initiations, the conceptual belief of belonging to, and possessing, a separate identifiable Aboriginal cultural identity, was fostered, a predictable child training system common to all parochial ethnic cultures world wide. A type of orientation towards stereotyping, which we may, if a more universal wisdom arises, recognise to be the implanting of attitudes which in the final reckoning may prove to be more limiting, divisive and destructive than useful. Certainly, I and many of you, at a superficial level are of the Aboriginal race, but deep within our wisdom unconscious are we not all well aware that skin colour is nor more than skin deep, that our cultural roots stem from the conditioning of our life experience, are similar to a lottery and would be totally different if we had grown up and been influenced at some other place or in some other time. Obviously, we simply exist as a manifestation of life within the laws of nature and if we have a race at all, it is the human race.

For now however it was early childish days, many more static fixed views were to be inculcated, assimilated and believed in which within the evolving maturity which the passage of time makes available to us can now be re-assessed. It is now seen to have served their purpose and be of no more use, like plastic bags in which we obtained some food, then it becomes sensible to throw them out with the rest of the garbage.

I was programmed into belief systems, Aboriginal laws, customs, kinship networks and other cultural conventions. Trained to neatly fit into society according to its already established rules. Children world wide have little freedom of choice in such matters, and even should they have, they do not have the wisdom to make useful judgements. We know that the child psychologist Dr Benjamin Spock subsequently recanted his earliest misunderstandings on this matter.

In my case, as it will have been in yours as it occurs everywhere in the world, the process of establishing a fixed view of identity was being cultivated and occurring. With the kindliest intent which we see as responsible parenthood, we introduce our children and charges to established traditional fixed views and customs which we ourselves accepted and have assimilated from our own elders without question or mature examination as they did from theirs. Without wisdom intervening, limitations of view are constantly recycled generation to generation and might not the spiral of attitudinal delusion, in contrast to the growing snowball of material knowledge, be downward, as error compounds error. Many are familiar with the party game where a whispered message travels a circle of people, arriving eventually back to its source much distorted by progressive word of mouth misunderstanding.

Early in life I was introduced to the isolation imposed by worldly customs being of mixed race, or minority group and of a group lacking worldly power or prestige. These were realities requiring rational calm understanding, they were simply facts but among most of us with little wisdom, we react with at least a subconscious resentment and discontent. Everyone, not just Aboriginals has felt this and made themselves disturbed and miserable by it. If in our adulthood, wisdom can be cultivated, we may come to see different wordly circumstances as simply normality within the infinite variety of possibilities within the kaleidoscopic spectrum of nature, and cease to torment ourselves and others with the ferment of resentment, anger and jealousy which stem from negative mind states. In fact, if we can succeed in penetrating to the underlying neutral nature of our most uncomfortable life experiences we can use this wisdom knowledge to establish a peace of mind which will make us very useful to both ourselves and others. Among other things it will facilitate a growing ability to be friendly, co-operative, tolerent, helpful and respected by others who are superficially different, be it racial, social, physical, sexual or any other, as we grow positive fruit from the negative manure of some of life's experience.

As with most of us, my cultural identity was planted deep within me. I grew older without any doubt at all in my mind of my "Aboriginality" as an absolute rather than a relative fact. Living close to the earth within a modified Aboriginal culture, even through childish eyes, there existed the opportunity and encouragement to observe nature, animal and vegetable life, climatic changes and human interactions. Initially I misunderstood what was only vaguely recognised, as pointing towards infinite wisdom and mystery unique to Aboriginal "dreamtime" knowledge. Not until now, when it is beginning to dawn on me, have I been able to disengage from this selective view and recognise that the dimly sensed allusions were universal, pointing far past the small section of the world stage which the Aboriginal culture occupies, but to the fundamental movement and change of everything in existence, the co-existence and mutual containment within the duality of all permanence and impermanence.

At the time a feeling grew which many will recognise in themselves, of being of and belonging to the country rather than invaders from some other galaxy. Somehow one sensed, contrary to what some people seemed to believe, that this was more real than our small pocket of human relations and customs. Sometimes people misunderstand, as did I, that this feeling is unique to Aborigines, but I have subsequently discovered that the same subconscious feeling occurs within people of other racial origins both in Australia and elsewhere.

As life progressed I passed the predictable milestones: movement from the outback station semi-itinerant life to primitive shanty settlement on the edge of town to facilitate communal schooling. I learned to swim, taught in the primitive "sink or swim" method which has turned out to be an accurate pointer as to how individuals are often treated by society. I made my first contact with people attempting to escape into alchohol and finding instead there a hell realm. There were also plusses, a social oneness and responsibility which, within the laws of duality was a double edged sword, giving shelter and support of a tribal and clannish type to those associated and similtaneously setting us apart from people who were not part of our group.

At primary school my teacher, a Mr John Stanlake to whom I will always be grateful, inspired and encouraged me in the pursuit of further education. Among other qualities, he demonstrated a universal raceless kinship in making special provisions at no little financial and social cost to himself in that racially insular town, for me to depart for higher education in the state capital.

Those two teenage years spent in Perth were a traumatic homesick experience as a foreigner in a strange country, but though at that time it resulted in academic failure, the seeds of wider horizons that were to flourish at a future time were sewn.

Still a child I returned to my home town Halls Creek with my tail between my legs but relieved to be out of that. I fell upon my feet and gladly accepted employment which was offered me in the local welfare office. Here I had a chance to grow at a pace I could handle, sheltered and trained and not required to compete. Gradually I assumed some clerical responsibility and had the opportunity of participating in daily field work, working at a soup kitchen and assisting the local nurse on the "native" reserve with the elderly, ill and infirm. It was a change to mingle as a semi-adult at close quarters with my own people who were, as are all people, sometimes kind and gentle, sometimes unreasonable and demanding.

Life took its usual course with marriage and motherhood the next chapter. A time of following instincts, trials and errors. Usually as parents we are little more than children ourselves, with fingers frequently crossed somehow we muddle through, laughing a lot, crying a lot, emotional, frenetic, frequently in a daze too busy with daily emergencies and distractions to grow far towards wisdom. As a family we established in the Geraldton area. Predictably, assisting the children with school homework rekindled academic interests. With some discomfort my smug self satisfaction at being okay was challenged as I was forced to recognise my ineptitude. I commenced as a full time student at the Geraldton Technical College. At the time I deluded myself into thinking that all my motivations were noble but with the passage of time it is not hard to see that I was inspired by the usual unhealthy helping of self gratification ego-conceit with which most of our superficially worthy activities are tarnished. Not that it was a bad move, just that I was not really as wonderful as I was kidding myself.

In time this all led to application and acceptance as a mature age student of primary teaching at this very campus where we are today. Our family resettled in Perth on a financial shoestring where the study programme and the need to spend periods in full outside employment caused privation and disruption to us all. Everyone was very patient with me and my ambitions and probably very relieved when at last I obtained by final qualification after seven years.

All this is not so special. Many can tell similar stories and will recognise how fortunate I have been to have had the opportunity to extend my interaction at close quarters with a wider circle of people and situations, especially with fellow travellers of other races on this life's trip.

Life was certainly not always smooth nor even productive. For a time I worked within a social support welfare agency run for and by Aboriginal personnel. Here unfortunately the targets and methods seemed to be vague and slipshod, superficial "band aid" approaches to problems not clearly identified nor meaningfully dealt with. How much this stemmed from lack of wise leadership and how much from my own lack of initiative, wisdom and creative thought is food for thought. Nevertheless I experienced what most of us have experienced at some time in our working lives, a feeling that one's job is a sinecure, that one is living a lie. Might it be more satisfying to be honestly unemployed than feeling dishonestly employed?

For some time now I have been employed as a teacher within the prisons system and hopefully this culture shock is at last carving large hunks out of my self delusions. I have found that my confidence in my formal and informal learning to equip me with all appropriate skills to handle the special circumstances of a prison school has been misplaced. I know that I am not a complete idiot and also that all of us have at times known ourselves to be inadequate to some important and responsible task which has been entrusted to us. The problem it seems does not lie in our formal and informal training, but that somehow we have overlooked the cultivation of our unspecific wisdom.

Within the prison school, perhaps even more than in some other places, difficult situations arise unexpectedly and find one wanting. In any occupation, errors, misunderstandings and reactions of friction, discord, irritation and agitation occur. In schools it is between staff and students, either way, and a prison situation is particularly sensitive due to the troubled state of mind of many inmates, and perhaps even some of their captors. One could relate a series of examples such as violence, drugs, personality clashes, sexual abuse and the like but there is no need. You are well able to imagine what occurs.

This working circumstance has alerted me for the first time in this life to the fact that one will get nowhere complacently sitting pat, on "set piece" solutions, but that in the unpredictable hurley-burley of life, only the cultivation of a spontaneous wisdom will cover all situations. For example, the identification and placating of strong and dangerous undercurrents which have their unrecognised source in unknown places, can only be sensed by intuitive wisdom. Without this, unhelpful, unsympathetic paranoia, strong arm tactics which are sure to backfire, or teacher "burn out" are the most likely results.

Many of us have had little opportunity to rub shoulders with truly cosmopolitan populations such as is found in a prison. Teaching there has offered me an opportunity to do this and I am beginning to see as illusion my long cherised view of my absolute Aboriginal identity and the limitations which this, like all other fixed views, imposes.

Gradually as one finds a path the feed back from students becomes more rewarding. One notices their appreciation of my difficulties in assisting them with their difficulties.

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The apparent separateness is seen as illusion. The teacher is at last being taught by her students. As this is a National Conference on Aboriginal Education, and as my life experiences have taught me egalitarian rather than nationalistic Aboriginal lessons, let there be no misunderstanding, this person who you see in front of you carries a majority of genetic Aboriginal blood in her veins and has lived the majority of her life within a society which is the same. I make this point because there may be some at some other time who may read this paper, cannot see me with their own eyes and may suspect that I am hardly Aboriginal. Make no mistake my friends. I am black!

Possibly what I am saying may not be popular with some at this time, but if it sparks some questioning thoughts in some of you at some time, I am content. I can only speak the truth as I see it.

At the bottom line this paper addresses itself to the realities of the problems of an apparently esculating division, and consequent friction within communities, with particular reference to the Australian community. Australian Aborigines as a minority race and dispossessed people have much to lose in this country from social conflict. As educators whose work is specifically orientated towards those who see themselves as Aboriginal and separate, can we not most help both them and the larger community by focussing our best efforts towards a constructive, rational non divisive approach and attitudes, rather than carelessly or unwittingly fostering separateness and ugly confrontations at any level?

"Fair go, we're Australians too" is a current convenient catch cry to point up the disadvantaged situation of many Australian Aboriginals, but might we not do well to remind ourselves that these words apply equally to any Australian. Is Aboriginal militancy any different or better than Arab, or Jew, or Irish or any other militancy. Militancy is a state of mind from which events only follow.

The events of the past which have created our current situation are gone beyond recapture. We well know that this continent was never an Aboriginal nation but simply the living place of a great many tribes of previous waves of immigrants who dispossessed each other and did not share their territories. Is not suggesting that we recreate something which never really existed, simple foolishness born of selfish motivation? All that can be reasonably done now is to act wisely and humanely to all concerned. In comparison to other places, the Australian society with all its faults is not so bad if we are honest. Aboriginals of today in the same way as other Australians of today belong to today. None of us are the past. When any of us push a special interest barrow, whether we be Aboriginal or other, our gains can only be at the cost of someone else. Is it truly reasonable to believe that I, born in Australia "X" number of years ago should be given some special rights or territory which is not available to a white Australian sister born on the same day, or some one born elsewhere who has been accepted into the Australian society of today, as a full member?

As educators we have some influence. We can assist with the cultivation of worldly skills which will help students of any age to share the normal responsibilities and benefits of being in a society, but even more, if we are worthy of our salt, we can do best by cultivating our own wisdom so that we may share that and inspire it in others.

"Who stuck in the mud can pull out another stuck in the mud!"

If this writer which the world call Doreen has so far learned anything on this life trip, apart from some mundane skills of worldly living, it has come from an evolving awareness that cleverness bears little relationship to greatness, and that knowledge is only a starting point from which, if sufficient effort is put forth, the noble fruit of wisdom can grow. That wisdom, seen by us in our "blinkered" perspective for most of our lives as a nebulous, intangible abstract is in fact a real possibility as the maximum culmination of human potential achievable by doctor, teacher, dustperson, drover, dole recipient or other alike.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude is extended to all those teachers, tutors, fellow students, family and other worldly supporters who have been of so much assistance to me in making such start in the direction of wisdom as has occurred to date.

Gratitude is extended to such people as Ven. Jagaro, Sister Khema, Mr Bruce Smoker, Pastor Frank Johnson and Pastor Denzel Humphries who examples have encouraged me to look deeper than was once my habit.

Gratitude is extended to a friend now known as "Samana", who approx. thirty years ago was known to some of you, your parents or grandparents under his then name of Don Hardwick, without whose encouragement, collaboration and assistance I would not have been able to offer to you today a paper better than trivial.

Finally, gratitude is expressed to the organisers of this conference for the opportunity we are having of cross-fertilisation with a wealth of carefully considered and challenging ideas from all participating. This occasion will be as good as we make it with corresponding results.

If all of us can participate in a spirit of positive open minded enquiry, attention, and good will, such conferences as this may prove to be the cutting edge of new and valuable trends and policies. Personally I have gained much already from the opportunity of preparing this paper. It was proved a catalyst to introspection and perhaps insight as I h[illegible]mehow found the courage to confront, examine and re-assess my own fixed and semi-fixed view[illegible] and values. It has involved some painful soul searching as I have challenged myself in many areas I previously thought sacrosant. I hope that my small effort may encourage listeners or readers to do likewise within their own introspection and eventually their actions.

Chapter 3

NYUNGAR WOMEN RETURNING TO EDUCATION

By Shirley Bennell

This paper aims to show how Nyungar women who were prevented from completing their formal education during the 1950's and 1960's, have been attempting to do so ever since. They have pushed for courses for adult Aboriginals to be set up at both the South West College of TAFE and the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education and have made up the majority of students in these courses. The paper looks at the difficulties they've met and the gains they have made.

The Nyungar People

As European settlement spread throughout the south-west of Western Australia, the Aborigines of the area were profoundly affected. As Tilbrook comments — "Traditional cultural practices gave way to a different pattern of life intimately interwoven with the farming communities of the newcomers. Customs and practices of the settlers were forced upon or adopted voluntarily by the Aborigines." (1983:10) However, as pointed out by Davies and McGlade in the article "Cultural values affecting the child at school", even though the Nyungar culture is greatly influenced by "mainstream Australian culture . . . there are real and significant differences in values between Aborigines and other Australian students." (1982:83)

Historical Background

The administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia has gone through many phases since colonisation began in 1829. In the nineteenth century, periods of conflict bordering on genocide were followed by policies of protection and segregation. Under these policies, Aboriginals were excluded by unequal laws from participating in the mainstream social, economic and political life of the state. Until the 1940's, very few Aboriginal children attended school in W.A. In general, they were prevented by regulations from attending government schools. (W.A.A.E.C.G. Report:1987)

From Protection to Welfare

In September 1951 the first conference of Commonwealth and State ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs was held and marked a change of policy from discrimination and protection to assimilation and welfare. This change was reflected in W.A. in the Native Welfare Act 1954 which amended the Native Administration Act 1905-1947. In the Native Welfare Act 1963, one statement was the duty of the department to provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of "natives". (Haynes et.al:1972:67-8)

Government Policies of the 1950's and 60's and the effect on Nyungar Education

During the 1950's and 1960's, many Nyungar children only went to school because it was law and if they didn't they could be taken from their parents and placed in

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SHIRLEY BENNELL, c/- Aboriginal Enclave, Bunbury Institute,
Robertson Drive, Bunbury W.A. 6230

missions and hostels. Many parents did not see the importance of their children receiving an education because many had no experience of any education, or, of those parents who did, most experienced only failure, punishment and humiliation.

- Many children had very little schooling because the families constantly moved looking for seasonal work.
- It was usual to attend school until at least the ages of 14-15 years. Boys usually went to work with their fathers or other relatives at various labouring jobs, while the females left school to help look after younger brothers and sisters, to work as house-maids or to have families of their own.
- School wasn't a very pleasant place to be because of the ignorance and indifference of teachers, students and regular "check-ups" from "the Welfare" for attendance, dress and health (scabies, lice etc).

Self-Determination and Self-Management

It was not until the late 1960's, especially the period following the 1967 Referendum, that the major legal inequalities were removed. Aboriginals were finally given voting rights and became eligible to receive pensions. In the field of education, the Federal Government began providing assistance to the states to enable them to carry out programmes aimed at upgrading Aboriginal education. The period since 1972 has been one of rapid change for Aboriginal education in W.A. Although the new policies of self-determination and self-management gained broad support in the Aboriginal community, some people saw it as a "protectionist" policy - it protects White Australia from world criticism, as, on the surface, it looks "liberal" when compared with policies of previous governments. (W.A.A.E.C.G. Report:1978)

Aboriginal Adult Education

In 1964 the W.A. Education Department established a section under the Technical Division to offer education to adult Aboriginal people. Classes covered such topics as hygiene, schooling, employment, budgeting, dressmaking, cooking and personal grooming. (Harwood:1969:49)

However it wasn't till 1975 that Nyungars in the Bunbury area became aware of Aboriginal Access courses being set up in Perth and Mrs Phyllis McGuire and Mr Horry Calgaret travelled to Perth to request that a similar course be introduced at the South West College. By 1981 this course commenced at the South West College with a class of 15 students. The course was based on practical English, maths and subjects that would be of value to the students' livelihoods and perhaps lead to employment in positions such as teacher aides, nursing aides, clerical assistants and other training schemes. No emphasis was placed on higher education at that stage. The majority of women who have returned to education in Bunbury, are the ones who attended primary and secondary school through the 1950's and 60's. The main reasons they give for returning to formal education are:

- for personal satisfaction and confidence
- family improvement by becoming role models
- to gain employment by being eligible for better jobs

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From the return to the classroom came the following positive results:

- ability to communicate at a variety of levels, e.g. government bureaucrats, Aboriginal community meetings, classroom tutorials and discussions, conferences at state and national levels.
- discussions with children's teachers.
- awareness of the importance of the sense of completing a course and going on to the next step.
- better financial position by gaining well-paid employment and an awareness of one's potential for further achievement in work or education.

Higher Education

In 1984, the planning of the new Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education began for a February 1986 intake. In August 1984, Mrs Rose Whitehurst wrote to the Executive Officer of the Institute on behalf of other Aboriginal Access (TAFE) students, requesting that assistance be developed to enable Aborigines to enrol in Institute courses. In particular, the group requested that a Bridging course be offered in Bunbury, to prepare promising applicants for higher education.

1985 saw about 20 Nyungars, male and female, undertake special testing to gain entry to the Bunbury Institute. Ten students, all females, commenced a twelve-week Bridging Course to prepare them for tertiary study, and in 1986 those ten commenced studies at the Bunbury Institute.

An Enclave room was set up and a coordinator was employed. The Enclave room became a sanctuary away from the class room and from home, but also was a building block towards confidence. Most Nyungar students do not feel relaxed in a classroom or when socializing with non-Aboriginal students. There is a need to "be Nyungar" with other Nyungar students and the Enclave allows for this. Without this, the Nyungar student could very easily "drop-out" or alternatively, lose contact with Nyungar people. The coordinators' encouragement, help and understanding was/is definitely a morale booster and the learning about Aboriginal culture, presented positively, is very important for urban Aboriginal students doing Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies.

After three years there are only three students still studying from the 1986 intake of 10. They have families and were first educated in the 1950's and 60's. The students who withdrew did not do so for lack of ability; they have been frustrated in their attempts to continue their education by some of the following problems:

Problems Leading to Withdrawals

Students have serious personal, family or financial problems which force them to leave their course before completion.

- extended family does not understand the deadlines the students have.
- always some family commitments.
- new role forced upon the student — family or friends try to use student's new knowledge writing letters, filling in forms, etc.
- male partners become stressed about being tied to the house, conflict arises and many women have to choose between marriage or education.

- child-care problems for women with young families.
- financially, study grants are inadequate being less than the "dole".
- students find the institution an alien environment because they find difficulty in fitting into the social framework and the institutional practices — academic language, lack of confidence in presenting tutorials and participating in class discussions.
- poor personal health such as high blood pressure and asthma which are often triggered by stress.

The following case studies are of married Nyungar women with families, who returned to education as soon as the opportunities arose locally.

Case Study 1

This woman completed a primary school education, was required to assume the responsibility of looking after younger brothers and sisters, therefore didn't enter high school. This pattern of responsibility has frustrated her efforts in everything she has tried to do:

— 1983 — Access course, South West College.
— 1984 — TAFE course — withdrew.
— 1985 — Bridging course — completed.
— 1986 — Tertiary studies, B.I.A.E. — withdrew.

However, this woman is making sure that her children are receiving a good high school education and one son has reached year 12.

Case Study 2

Completed year 12 Leaving Certificate in 1968. In 1976 sat for Aboriginal Student Intake Testing and entered Mt Lawley College in 1977 to study Dip. Teaching. Completed one year of course with 3 year old child and 5 month old baby to care for. Feeling of alienation in the city and family commitments led to withdrawal from course. Now with five children this student realised the importance to the Aboriginal community of having Aboriginal teachers and re-enrolled in the same course in 1986. She is due to graduate in 1988.

Case Study 3

1963 — educated to year 10, received a High School Certificate. Sent to Mt Henry Hospital to commence a nursing aide course, stayed 6 months and left because of family obligations. 1984-5 resumed studying with the Access course. 1986 obtained a 12 month training scheme as a clerical assistant and as a vacancy subsequently arose, now has full-time position. The fact that the work is permanent and in a supportive environment is a big plus, and this position has only been achieved through a return to education.

My Own Experience

I started school the year that I was turning seven years of age and thus was always a year older than the other children in the class. By the time I was in year 9, I was of legal school leaving age so I "shot through". The main reason I had for leaving was the unpleasantness of school as I felt that the teachers never gave me credit for what I did know. I went into a variety of unskilled jobs, married and had a family. Although my own children have left school, I have in my care children of relatives.

I returned to study in 1981 at the South West College of TAFE in Bunbury doing Aboriginal Access. At the same College from 1982-1983, I did various TAFE courses and the Advanced Education Entry Certificate (External) from Mt Lawley. I was offered a training position in an office which did not lead to permanent work and in fact interrupted my studies. In 1985, more TAFE study and waiting. 1986 was my big chance for a "crack at" high education. I enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree and three years "down the track" am due to graduate in November, 1988. However, I still feel the need to do more study perhaps to acquire skills in administration or management.

Conclusion

Nyungar women who have returned to education have made significant personal gains in terms of their self-image and self-respect, and have seen their children begin to benefit from their mothers' positive experiences with education. Some women have gained employment where they are able to contribute to the Nyungar community, other have gained permanent work in clerical positions. Those who have almost completed degrees and diplomas have yet to see where all this hard work will take them and whether employment opportunities will be available to them in the South West. For some, the difficulties met along the way have proved too great to overcome, and so these women have withdrawn from continuing their education for the time being. Progress is still slow and numbers are small, but Nyungar women in the Bunbury Area are taking advantage of the opportunities that arise despite the considerable difficulties they have faced and continue to face.

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Chapter 4

LEARNING PATTERNS OF THE SONGWRITER'S WORKSHOP

by Barry Borneman

Introduction

This short paper has grown out of the need to look for the ingredients that made the Aboriginal and Islander Songwriter's Workshop such an apparent success. What was it that motivated the group to work all day Saturday and to participate enthusiastically in a program that ran from 8.30am — 8.00pm each day?

There was the obvious subject ingredient of 'music' which has an important place in Aboriginal communities, and the participants were generally highly motivated. But even with a subject matter close to 'self' and the subsequent motivation it engendered, a workshop can still possess inbuilt structures that actually inhibit creativity and learning.

In the Songwriter's Workshop the participants were relaxed, creative and in control of their environment. In asking the question "What was it that made this workshop such a success, and such an obvious learning experience for the participants?"; the insightful answer lies not so much in looking at what the organizers did, but rather in what were the participants able to do that came natural to them? What were some of the learning styles that they implemented that allowed 150 songs in 14 languages to be recorded over the two workshops?

There was no decision prior to the workshop to take particular note of learning styles. This paper is simply an observation in retrospect; a looking for a few simple keys that may provide a structure that allows these natural learning styles to operate in other workshops and so facilitate great participation and learning.

Background

In May of 1987 and 1988 an Aboriginal and Islander Songwriters and Production workshop was held in Darwin at the Summer Institute of Linguistics centre. In 1987 the workshop drew 39 participants from nine different communities ranging geographically from the Torres Strait Islands to Halls Creek (WA). The 1988 workshop had 45 participants from 10 communities with strong representation from the northern Arnhem Land communities, stretching as far south as Ernabella (SA), west to Looma (WA), and east to Hopevale (Qld).

In both years only a few of the participants had actually had experience in writing their own songs previously but most had a natural interest in music. Each workshop was held over 10 days. The students' travel and living expenses were funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Training and all participants were housed on the SIL Centre.

Brief Outline of the Course

The participants were taken through four ways of songwriting.

i) Translating a known song

ii) Using a known tune and adding their own words

BARRY BORNEMAN, S.I.L., P.O. Berrimah N.T. 0828

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iii) Using given words and developing their own tune

iv) Producing their own music and words

The course was structured so that each aspect of songwriting was introduced by,

i) A demonstration and lectures from experienced songwriters,

The program was structured so that as little amount of time as possible was spent in a structured classroom environment. Lecture type presentations took only up to one hour each morning.

ii) Participants were given immediate opportunity to have a go

and to apply what had been taught in the lecture. The creative songwriting occurred as participants broke off into their language groups (often working in conjunction with an S.I.L. linguist) and went off to their own 'territory' on the centre to develop their songwriting.

iii) Results were shared with the group:

Progress was then shared with the whole group both informally and formally. Some presented their songs in more formal class report-back times and concerts, while others used the informal avenue of morning devotions and nightly 'fellowship meetings'.

iv) Songwriting efforts directed toward a finished product.

The course was structured to provide maximum opportunity for the participants to immediately apply the songwriting technique just introduced and take it right through to the finished product within a couple of days. The setting up of a sound room for recording played an important role in this.

v) Creative time

The afternoon and evening session was left for participants to develop their songs further and to record their songs. Some electives like 'guitar playing' and discussion topics were also held in the afternoon for those interested.

It is in this context that this paper takes a retrospective look at the workshop, and notes some of the learning patterns that were practised, drawing out some tentative implications for framing future workshops with traditional Aboriginal participants.

1. Creativity and Learning Deals with the Perfecting of the Whole, Not in Part

Observation A — Translating a song — From beginning to end

The Kriol speakers from Katherine (NT) were doing a very free translation of a song from a traditional Aboriginal language that had been sung by another group at the workshop. The song was progressing well but they struck some problems during the final stages of the translation. The group needed to sing this troublesome part several times to try and sort out what they would do with it. On each occasion the group started from the very beginning singing the whole. Eventually the changes that were required were made, but not by isolating that particularly troublesome part of the song.

Observation B — Writing a Song — From beginning to end

The group from Bathurst Island (NT) were taking the Tiwi translation of the biblical story of the prodigal son and putting it to a tune they already knew. The song included several verses, however they would not isolate a verse even when just correcting a minor problem. Even when working on verses 4 and 5 they would still sing the whole song through from the beginning.

Observation C — Recording a song — From Beginning to end

The Kriol speakers were practising in the sound studio prior to recording and were having trouble with a part near the end of the song. They insisted on singing the whole song to get that small part right even though they were losing valuable recording time.

Some Implications for Future Workshops

i) These observations appear to indicate a preference to want to deal with the whole rather than isolate the parts of the whole. Learning and creativity is enhanced when one can see how things fit together from beginning to end. The pedagogy for introducing content material should then be to present it in the context of the wider picture and preferrably in a real life event not something abstract (e.g. don't teach the theory of song making but begin by doing it, then redoing it).

The opposite to this would be the patch quilt approach in which the parts are put together bit by bit until finally, presto! enlightenment — one can see how it all fits together.

ii) This may mean you need to allow more time for repetition. There will be a need to retell the whole picture before beginning to concentrate on the specifics. Retell, retell and retell. After each retelling of the 'whole picture' the participants will be able to confirm more of what is 'true' and from there take on more new knowledge.

2. **Where Sharing and the Passing on of Significant Knowledge if included as part of the Learning Process, Creativity is Enhanced.**

Observation A — 'Fellowship Meetings' not by name only

Almost every evening of the Workshop participants were involved in what they called 'fellowship meetings' which would begin around 8.30 and not finish until after 10.00 (NB: these were not in the programme). Even on the night of the concert which finished around 10.00 a small 'fellowship meeting' occurred around the camp of the Ernabella mob (SA) which continued on till 1.30am. These 'fellowship meetings' were comprised of different groups coming and singing songs in their language. Some songs were sung from one night to the next until others could also join in. These informal meetings provided not only the content but the vital 'good feeling' between the groups which became the most important vehicle for the transmission of songs and ideas from one language to another language group.

Observation B — Our song shall be your song, and your song our song

A specific example of sharing a song occurred when the Ernabella group and with Wadeye (NT) group sat around their camp fire singing. Punch Thompson from Ernabella asked if he could put the Murrinth-Patha song from Wadeye into Pitjantjantjara. First they translated it into English then put it into Pitjantjantjara. When it came to the concert both the Wadeye and Ernabella groups got up and

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sang each others' song. This set the scene for other shared songs and was became one of the characteristics of the 1988 Workshop. In their written evaluations Stan Ninnal from Wadeye wrote 'We are always talking and sharing with each other here at the workshop' while Billy Gumana also from Wadeye said, 'this workshop is really good to learn about good things, like learning from other people's songs and singing together, teaching friends . . . .'

Observation C — More than just a song — a community happening

The groups from Galiwinku (NT) worked on producing a song to a traditional tune. There was much discussion among the group and when they came to performing it at the concert they involved other important people from their community in presenting the song. The song was not just the product of an individual but the result of much sharing. It was clearly owned as a group and as a consequence had more 'power' and significance. This song was given prominence at the concert as it was shared with the wider audience.

Some Implications for Future Workshops

i) The theme of sharing must have prominence over the idea of a workshop as a place of imparting knowledge in one single direction (i.e. from the instructors to the participants). Workshops must revolve around shared experiences, shared knowledge, shared control. This means creating those informal opportunities for sharing and decision making to occur rather than tying up all the time with 'formal' activities which Europeans have a distinct inclination to do.

ii) The importance of sharing 'significant knowledge' means workshops must be relevant to real life needs. Unless participants have something to contribute and are seen as having something to contribute, a workshop is unlikely to inspire or be a good learning experience.

iii) Plan group events that can become significant shared experiences into the program. (E.g. Mini excursions or group activities like a concert or presentation.

3. The Songwriters 'Environment' (Physical, Spiritual, Relational) determined their Ability to call on their Creativity and Produce Songs

Observation A — Group Dynamics — who's Responsible?

The group from Ngukurr (NT) was extremely large in number (17) as well as covering quite an age span. This caused great difficulties for the first couple of days as the group had not sorted through how decision making would occur. The 'music makers' among them felt inhibited as they tried to work in with some of the older, forceful ladies. The group was unable to function creatively. The 'missionary' who was with them decided to call a group meeting and have them talk about the problem of how they were going to write their songs. After much discussion it was decided that they could work in informal smaller groups and then the writers of the song would bring it back to the larger group. Once this framework was set, motivation immediately returned and music began to flow.

Observation B — Disharmony in the Kitchen Produced Discord in the Music Making

The group of six Walmajarri speakers from Looma (WA) shared a house. After a couple of days one of the ladies made a passing comment suggesting that her older sister was not doing her share of work around the house. The older sister defended herself vigorously. The songwriting sessions continued but for this group their creativity seemed to dry up. For the next two days the older sister sat slightly outside the circle not contributing. The whole group was affected. Not until the conflict was resolved could the participants take their minds off the 'discord' and actually participate meaningfully in the workshop. It took a day or two for it all to resolve itself.

Observation C — You Must have the Right Instrument for the Right Medium

The group from Oenpelli (NT) were very talented musically. After discussion about traditional tunes they sat under their tree at an impasse. Nothing would come. No music, no tune, no matter how hard they tried. An ethnomusicologist who was working with them suggested to the young man with the guitar around his neck that he remove it. He did so and picked up some sticks instead. The clapping of the sticks instinctively brought out a traditional tune. Once the hindrance was gone, they began to move forward.

Observation D — An Open, Secure Space Produces an Open Mind

When it came to songwriting or any group activity the groups were able to work wherever they liked on the centre. Each of the groups established their 'territory' early and consistently worked in that space. The majority chose territory close by where they were housed and it gave them a sense of control of their life. Giovanni Tipungwuti's (Bathurst Island) comment that 'this is a peaceful place to live' stemmed, in part, from this factor.

The more formal setting of the classroom was only chosen by one group, the Torres Strait Islanders who were an older group and who had much more exposure and experience with western education models. They felt comfortable in the more formal setting.

Observation E — 'Becoming Like One Family'

The important part of the workshop was morning devotions. It was stressed from the beginning that no 'staff' were to lead these but rather it was a time when the participants could learn from one another. It was their workshop. As each group shared, this time took on greater and greater importance. No time limit was placed so it could range from 10 minutes to an hour in some cases. What happened was that more and more personal experiences were shared and the group developed a strong unity. Welcome and good-bye songs were shared in this context, along with dreams and visions — but there was not set format. In the personal evaluations the value of the 'devotions time' was continually commented on. It opened up an avenue to belonging. Rupert Jack from Ernabella (SA) commented, 'As we lived here together we become like one family. And I've thought to myself that we're living her together like as if we are from one place, not at all shy'.

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Some Implications for Future Workshops:

i) If there is unease, particularly if it relates to family, every effort must be made to deal with it rather than just hope it goes away.

ii) Participants need to be able to establish their own territory.

iii) Facilitator or peace maker in a group situation is a great help. Any time spent on developing relationships is not wasted.

iv) The physical environment (whether a guitar around the neck or seating arrangements) can have a significant bearing on how a participant responds.

v) Don't silence participants by hiding our own teaching insecurities behind formalism.

vi) Work at participants having control and a real part in decision making.

vii) Pay as much attention to the general well being of the participants as to the content of the course.

Chapter 5

NYUNGAR LANGUAGE PROJECT

by Tony Calgaret
Rose Whitehurst
Sandra Wooltorton

INTRODUCTION *by Tony Calgaret*

Before I give my perception of our Nyungar Language Course and Kit, I feel it important to reflect on the reasons why my Nyungar Language almost became extinct.

The reasons are many and varied, however, perhaps were I to try to take over a country as did the Wetjelas in Australia so many years ago, I would start by showing how strong I was then destroy the indigenous peoples' beliefs, languages, culture and take his lands.

I would then control their movements and restrict their ability to obtain their natural foods thus making them dependant on foods I supplied.

This is what was efficiently achieved in the South West and other areas in this country.

Together with the repressive introduced laws one would be in a position to control the people.

I am happy to say that through it all we, the Nyungar people of the south West, have retained our own identity, contempory language and last but not least, pride in our culture.

Something that we must always remember is that we are survivors and as such we must always remember that people have tried to destroy us yet we still survive and will continue to do so until the end of time.

In terms of retaining our language, some of our old people have been minders of the language, together with some of the younger Nyungar people who were fortunate enough to remember their own tongue taught to them by their old people in their respective areas.

We have made a serious attempt to provide a basis from which future generations of my people will be able to learn the complexities of my language and appreciate the need to further refine our work, for certainly there will be a need to do so in the future so our language will continue to be a living thing.

This Kit we intend producing, is in my opinion, an attempt to revive and promote a lively interest in the language for both Nyungar and non Nyungar persons. In doing so it will restore my language to its rightful place in Australian society and in linguistic circles as a language worth studying and promoting.

MY PERCEPTIONS OF NYUNGAR LANGUAGE COURSE AND KIT

The Course:-

Initially when I discussed the idea of a Nyungar Language Course, and whether I would be interested in taking part in it, I was dubious as to whether there would be sufficient numbers of Nyungars to warrant a course.

ANTHONY P. CALGARET, S.A.L.O., 6 Skerves Street, Bunbury W.A. 6230
SANDRA WOOLTORTON, R.M.B. 258, Boyanup W.A. 6237
ROSE WHITEHURST, P.O. Box 811, Bunbury W.A. 6230

These doubts soon disappeared when, in a short time we had more people than expected wishing to take part in it.

And so, with the assistance of a Federal government grant, and a facilitator, the course commenced at the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education.

The grant was to employ instructors, these being Sandra Wooltorton, Rose Parfitt and Kathy Northover. Sandra structured the course and lessons with both Rose and Kathy ensuring the pronunciation used was correct.

Course Aids:-

During the course, aids were used to assist with learning. These consisted of cards with the Nyungar words and pictures on them on one side and the English word on the reverse. A tape recorder and cassettes to record people speaking and a variety of books and personal knowledge were also used.

During the course we decided that there may be some differences in pronunciation and recognised the individual right of various persons to use their pronunciations. (It was rather interesting to hear the differences in dialects of the same language.)

Books Used in Course:-

We used a variety of books including Wilf Douglas, George Moore and the Marribank Dictionary, together with lively discussions on Karl Van Brandenstein. Although we concentrated mostly on Wilf Douglas, we did use Moore and Marribank to supplement the others with the exception of Van Brandenstein. In hindsight, perhaps we should have concentrated more on the Marribank dictionary rather than Wilf Douglas as we did during the course.

There was a Van Brandenstein interpretation we could have used although we chose to discard his theory because he wished to offer the pure language of settlement days.

We thought, as do many, that language is a living thing and as such, should be taught as a living language which people would be able to relate to.

Aside from that, his spelling or linguistic method of writing the language was far too difficult. We did not, indeed, do not, wish to make the language learning process difficult in terms of the written language.

This consideration was to allow ourselves an easy method of writing, and future pupils the same.

Personal Knowledge of Language:-

We were all amazed at the amount of our language that was stored in our memory once we started to again use it. Many, many words came to the fore once we started speaking and reading our language.

Criticisms:-

There were several points which need to be examined in any similar course. These are:-

1. Students must only use English when necessary. This will help students to concentrate and think Nyungar, thus making the learning of Nyungar easier.
2. The Marribank Dictionary should be used as a base dictionary followed by Moore and Douglas and Van Brandenstein.

3. The course needs to be full time to get the maximum effect, not intermittent as was our course.
4. I am unsure as to the wisdom of using an educational institution as the learning place. I think a family clan group orientation grouping would be more successful.

Conclusion:-

I believe the course as is was successful but could do with some variations or improvement in some aspects.

The Kit will most certainly increase the awareness and the knowledge among both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal persons of our language and culture.

Some Aboriginal persons including myself, did not wish to use Van Brandenstein's interpretation because when he spoke to some of the old people, he told them their pronunciations were incorrect and that his was right.

Like others who believe language is a living thing, we decided to ignore his interpretation.

It is my belief that when this Kit is fully developed, we will see a resurgence of the Nyungar language of the South West, perhaps even being introduced into schools.

Where previously we were beaten by missionaries for using our own tongue, we will again be able to communicate among ourselves in our original tongue.

This in turn will help our people to once again be proud of being Nyungar and not be ashamed to identify themselves as such.

It is surely the first step to resurrecting part of our Culture which the Wetjela tried to destroy.

Then slowly but surely Wetjelas will recognise Nyungars as they are.

The *Proud* Aboriginal people of the South West of Western Australia.

THE PROJECT *by Sandra Wooltorton*

The Nyungar Language Project is a 3 part project consisting of:

Part 1 Introductory Nyungar Language Kit

Part 2 Advanced Nyungar Language Kit

Parts 1 and 2 are both self-contained course kits mainly for teachers or group facilitators, but useable by motivated individual learners. The kits contain the course outline and course content, background reading, lesson plans, and all aids necessary, including audio cassettes, word cards and charts.

Part 3 Oral history and language recording and writing project

As the writer, my role is one of co-ordinator of Nyungar informants, speakers, artists and written materials, and to write the course framework and prepare materials based on the advice from informants, speakers and on the written material available.

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Since its original inception, the concept of the Nyungar Language Project has been developed considerably.

It was originally intended to be merely a brief collection of programmes and lesson plans, however the restricted usefulness and likely ineffectiveness of this collection is now evident. There is a vast amount of interest in this kit and many people are waiting to do the course. However there are very few teachers who would be able/willing to teach from such a basic collection, therefore it was realised early that the kit should be fully self contained and useable by other than qualified teachers. In its current form people with only basic Nyungar Language knowledge will be able to facilitate the course. The only prerequisites for the facilitator are:

1. Ability to facilitate and lead group discussions etc. such as a person who has or could chair meetings.
2. Some background in Aboriginal or Intercultural studies. (A Nyungar person is considered to have a suitable cultural background.)
3. Ability to read and study independently and be able to independently prepare him/herself in advance of each lesson. A chapter of the book MUST be read before the lesson commences to enable the person to have a knowledge of and adequately explain the concepts being dealt with in the lessons.

For Part 2, an extra requirement for the facilitator will be to have facilitated Part 1, preferably with the same group.

The aim of Part 1 will be knowledge of the basics of Nyungar Language in its cultural context and conversational and written ability at this level. the aim of Part 2 will be to take students from the end point of Part 1 to a more extensive level of Nyungar vocabulary and conversational ability, grammar, writing, translating and interpreting. By the end of Part 2, students will be able to be fully conversant with Nyungars from their own and nearby dialects, and have a knowledge of most or all Nyungar words which have been written down. They will easily be able to use all Nyungar Language References, and will have a clear understanding of and be fully conversant with issues relating to the spelling of Nyungar words, and language resurrection issues.

Because the project is based in Bunbury and was initiated by Bunbury Nyungars, the dialect used for most written and audio cassette work will be that used by the broad Bunbury region Nyungars, (including Bunbury, Busselton, Collie and North to Pinjarra). Spelling will be based on the alphabet used for the Marribank Conference with words spelt according to the Bunbury region dialect. A Panel is soon to be formed which will make advisory decisions, including decisions on the pronunciation and hence spelling of the written words in the course.

Where speakers from a different region are used on cassettes, their contribution will be properly referenced to their region. All speakers used will be fully identified, by name, age, area of origin and area where they have spent most of their lives.

NYUNGAR LANGUAGE KIT:

Description of Part 1

One complete kit will consist of a box, containing:

A) A book consisting of:
   i) **An Introduction** to the Kit, which will describe the Kit, and the knowledge and understandings the students need to have in order to derive the most benefit from the use of it. The course will primarily be for Nyungars who speak some conversational Neo-Nyungar whilst in the company of other Nyungars and who want to strengthen their language.
   ii) **A Rationale** which will be a brief description of the cultural setting of the language, as it existed in pre-Wetjala times, early Wetjala times and the situation today. This brief description will lead to a brief overview of and the reasons for our own 1986 course, the way it began and was run and problems encountered by us and ways we overcame them.

      This overview would lead to reasons for the new course, and points which must be understood and taken into account before the course is started, including a short discussion about language resurrection.
   iii) **A Description** of how to use the course, from the point of view of
      a) the teacher or group facilitator
      b) the student who is independently learning.
   iv) **Background** information for each lesson. There will be a chapter for each lesson. This will be essential minimum knowledge and understandings for the group facilitator, plus excerpts from references; photos; pictures; sections from dictionaries, etc. as required in the lesson. Readings for the teacher from easily obtainable references will be listed at the conclusion of each chapter (such as Neville Green's or Lois Tilbrook's books).

B) A programme which will be an easy to refer to outline of the content of the lesson plans, and a suggested timetable. It was be on a large fold-out page.

C) The Lesson Plans will be step by step details of activities to do in order to achieve maximum learning from the materials provided. they will be easy to follow, and on large cards. There will be 20 x 1 + ½ hour lesson plans.

D) A set of 16 audio cassettes. The audio cassettes will relate to 16 of the 20 lessons. Oral learning, listening and pronunciation are of paramount importance in a language course where the language was formerly purely an oral language. Also, this style of learning is encouraged in this course.

   In our first course, a problem was that students' oral confidence and comprehension lagged behind their written language knowledge, skills and understanding. Even though we anticipated and took steps to prevent this situation, it did happen. Therefore, steps will be taken to prevent this from happening in this course. Students will not write until the fifth lesson - oral and pictorial learning will be used. (This will also avoid "translational learning": learning the Nyungar word and its English translation, rather than the Nyungar word and its concept.)

   In addition, everything will be orally presented in Nyungar Language on cassette, for students to learn 'correct' pronunciation of Nyungar language, vowels, consonants and sound combinations, words and phrases. Several (if possible, approximately 10) speakers will be used.

E) Word cards. The word cards will be a series of approximately 100 cards (each 100mm x 100mm) with a Nyungar word on one side, and picture concept on the other. The purpose of these cards is to allow students to learn the concept and the language directly, rather than learning a Nyungar word and its English translation. This process, together with the audio cassettes facilitates oral Nyungar language development, and the ability to 'think' in Nyungar language, rather than the mental translation of everything, which is cumbersome and detrimental to learning.

F) Charts. 5 Charts will be in each kit, to assist the facilitator to adequately explain particular concepts of word endings and tense changes.

Each lesson plan, and aid used during that lesson will be clearly numbered. For example, lesson No. 1 and everything pertaining to lesson plan No. 1 will be clearly labelled (1), etc.

The very clear themes which continue throughout the course are:

i) The cultural situation of the language. The physical environment of the South West of WA 200 years ago, with the traditional Nyungar cultures was the setting for the traditional Nyungar languages. The South West of WA in the '80s and beyond is the physical setting for the modern Nyungar languages and cultures. (The factors causing the cultural and language change over the years are examined in the course).

The student group is acknowledged as having the culture and language knowledge that contemporary Nyungars have. Their experience is what they are taking to the course, and is the starting point for learning progressively more and more of the language.

ii) The dialectal variations are stressed. Students are encouraged to use the variation of a word which they and their family is familiar with. If they don't know it or it isn't known in their group or area, *then* they use the word as presented, perhaps until such time as they find out a preferred local stress or suffix variation in the word.

iii) Problems with acceptance of a spelling system and other issues are raised where appropriate. At all times, the issue is presented to the students and if available an accepted IAAS version (from the Marribank Conference) so that students can be involved in decision making about their language. (The system which is used to spell all Australian Aboriginal languages will be the system used for presentation of new words, stories, etc.)

iv) Oral and pictorial learning is used as the introductory method of learning. Much opportunity for listening and speaking is provided, before the commencement of writing. Students are encouraged to learn this way throughout the course, especially later in the course where, because of the amount and meaning of the words, new learning must be presented in the oral or written form. For this reason, students will be encouraged to do the course in "family" or "close friend" groups, so that there will be plenty of opportunity for oral practice.

v) 16 lessons will be accompanied by audio cassettes. The cassettes will be: Nyungartja conversations between old people, Nyungars reading or telling stories in Nyungartja or Neo-Nyungar, or other activities as required in specific parts of lessons. Several old people have already offered to help, and it is hoped that there will be at least ten speakers used.

NYUNGAR LANGUAGE COURSE HELD IN BUNBURY

What Happened:

A series of 40, 2 hours learning sessions were held, with a facilitator/organiser and an older Nyungar Language Advisor.

The group started with 8 students (hereafter referred to as group members), and finished with 5 (one of whom missed the last sessions due to illness).

Several advisory visits were made by Nick Thieburger, a linguist working for the Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies.

The group progressively worked through a programme of Nyungar Language and cultural studies, prepared by the facilitator based on the book by Wilf Douglas, "The Aboriginal Languages of the South West of WA", the draft dictionary of Nyungar words from the Marribank Conference, and a dictionary written c1843 by George Moore.

The programme included language rules and practices using those rules, word learning activities, Nyungar word and phrase learning activities, opportunities to practice speaking with the language advisor and other group members, summarising and precis work in Nyungar language, translating and interpreting practice from English to Nyungar and Nyungar to English, and story writing. The programme had a cultural studies base, and consideration whenever possible was given to the cultural context

How It Happened:

The group members' life experiences as Nyungars and their knowledge of the Nyungar Language and culture which they use and are part of every day was the starting point for the course.

The language advisor was an older woman with a large vocabulary and knowledge of Nyungar Language and Culture. A second older woman also came in occasionally.

The facilitator had had experience as a teacher of adults and children, and as a course writer and organiser for Aboriginal students, particularly in innovative fields such as Aboriginal Teacher Education.

The learning process was based on all the group members' life experiences.

Nick Thieburger, who was then employed by the Institute for Applied Aboriginal Studies as a linguist, and was working on the Nyungar Language, visited when possible to advise on language matters.

The Process:

Group members were expected to accept responsibility for their own learning, and a learning process called curriculum negotiation was used, which made students equal participators in course and lesson planning. The process focussed on the questions:

What do we already know?
What do we need to know?

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How do we find it out?
How do we know when we've got there?

This was a continual re-negotiation and evaluation process. Basically, at the conclusion of each lesson, the facilitator, together with the group, evaluated the learning during the lesson, then discussed what the group next needed to know and how it would be found out. (Reference was made to the course programme, and a re-negotiation of this was carried out). After the content of the next lesson was discussed, organisation required was planned and tasks for obtaining gear, studying and preparation were allocated. (Most classwork preparation and organisation was undertaken by the facilitator).

In summary, the facilitator accepted responsibility for class organisation, obtaining of lesson material, studying of information preparation and smooth flow of the lesson, and the "facilitating" of the lesson. Group members accepted responsibility for their own learning, and any obligations to the group that this entailed. The programme for the course was an earlier version of the course outline for Part 1 of the Nyungar Language Kit.

Evaluation:

Overall, all group members feel the course was successful; everyone learnt much more Nyungar Language to supplement their contemporary Nyungar Language and have a better understanding of the cultural setting of their language.

SPECIFIC EVALUATION AREAS

Speaking:

Pronunciation of words was greatly assisted by Mrs Rosie Parfitt and Mrs Kathy Northover. Mrs Parfitt in particular attended most learning sessions. She gave a local (Collie) pronunciation for new words, and was of great assistance with the learning of vowels and consonants. She had a great understanding of the language and Nyungar issues and we are greatly indebted to her for her assistance. The method used was for Rosie to spend time with the facilitator to go through new words and preparation before the lesson. When new words were being learnt, she would repeat the word several times for group members to copy. She would correct pronunciations where appropriate, and also made several cassettes for group members to listen to after the lesson for revision.

As there are different dialectal variations of words, often everyone had different pronunciations for the same word. The rule accepted, was: everyone must use the pronunciation they are familiar with. If they don't know it, then use Rosie's or a family member's pronunciation. If no-one knows it, then use the variation given in the references until better knowledge is available to confirm or alter it. This system worked effectively.

A problem in the area of speaking, however, was that group members were too shy to "speak up" in Nyungar language as the programme progressed. Group members' reading, writing and understanding of Nyungar language was always far ahead of people's conversational ability. We had anticipated this problem, but still it happened. Solutions to this problem in future courses include having no writing at all for the first

3 or 4 lessons and having assertive type activities such as drama and oral activities with early lessons to enable people to feel confident with each other. Even more oral situation for language practice should be provided. At least half of each lesson should be oral practice only.

Listening:

Listening was always a problem, as even when Rosie came she could not, for quite some time converse with anyone, except at a basic level (as she had no one to converse to). Useful listening sessions arose when both Rosie and Kathy came along. There were plenty of opportunities to listen to correct pronunciation of single words and sentences, but not conversations. In future courses, taped conversations should be constantly available, at all levels of the course.

Language Rules:

The facilitator and group studied references available such as Douglas: "Aboriginal Languages of the South West", and old dictionaries such as George Moore to find correct language rules. There was little advice to steer the group in this area. However, some basic rules of grammar were covered and the group is aware that more learning may be needed in this area when information is available. Sufficient rules were learnt to write and speak sentences with as correct as possible grammar and word order.

Spelling:

Spelling was at the start a large problem, however, the group overcame this obstacle with a change in attitude. The basic problem is that Nyungar Language does not have an agreed upon uniform spelling system. To compound this, there are various dialects and preferred pronunciations for different localities and different clans. The group accepted the attitude that for convenience, a set of spelling rules would be used. Because of ease of availability, the W. Douglas system was used but with reservations. All group members were aware that at a future time a more effective spelling system may become available, which could readily be learnt. Most group members used the Douglas system to spell the words the way they wanted them pronounced. The same attitude to spelling was adopted as that to pronunciation: people wanted to spell the word the way they pronounced it, although by and large the spelling as presented by Douglas was used, with people making small oral alterations as required during oral reading. The group now have access to the system used by the people doing the Marribank draft dictionaries, which seems more appropriate and when the course is repeated this system will be used. It will be used in the Nyungar Language Kit which is currently being prepared.

Knowledge:

The course enabled people to be aware of, refine, and more effectively use their knowledge and understanding of their language and culture. It enabled people to make useable their knowledge of culture and language.

WHERE WE ARE GOING TO *by Rose Whitehurst*

Quite a few of our old people have passed on — taking with them their knowledge, language and culture. Therefore, before we lose more of our old people, we must record their history, language and culture, before it too is lost. Not only should the old people be interviewed, but family groups and individuals as well.

We have lost so much in our region. Our hunting weapons and artifacts were destroyed along with our culture and language to a great extent.

Nyungar language was classed taboo by missionaries, but our people used to speak behind closed doors or at night when the missionaries and the white man were not around.

That is *why* it is so great to see a language kit like this become a reality, where we can once again learn and speak our own language with pride and in the open.

Tony gave his views on the course run in Bunbury, and although frustrating at times I got so much pleasure from it, especially when the two older women conversed in Nyungartja and we could understand what they were talking about. Even though some of their conversations were a little embarrassing at times.

Plans have now been put in place to employ a field officer and a writer-co-ordinator. The field officer will spend two weeks with each family, groups and individual recording, collecting and writing language, dialect pronunciation, cultural knowledge, photos, history and stories. Information on bush tucker will also be compiled. This information when completed will be added to the already existing kit as part 3.

This project has total support of the Southern Aboriginal Corporation, which is a regional body of individual Nyungars and Aboriginal organisations throughout our area.

We believe this is the first step in raising the white community's awareness of Nyungar language and culture and is perhaps the first serious attempt to document a dying language and revive it, thus restoring a degree of pride to our people.

We believe the Theme for this Conference is very apt to our kit — "Learning *the Nyungar Language* My Way".

Chapter 6

ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE: DOES IT COUNT?

by Fran Crawford

I'd like to start this afternoon with two Kimberley stories. Kimberley stories have been some of my best learning experiences. Following the stories I will develop an argument that perhaps Aboriginal knowledge doesn't count as much with non-Aboriginal controlled professions such as social work as it should. Then look at why this might be so and share some of the beginning strategies the Curtin School of Social Work has developed to open itself to listen to and learn from Aboriginal knowledge.

This paper rests on my conviction, borne of practice, that an understanding of Aboriginal knowledge is fundamental to the delivery of an effective social work practice in this State. I would argue that without such an understanding, a professional service to Aboriginal people is unachieveable. This paper explores how to ensure social workers are effectively equipped to work in this West Australian situation.

Two Stories

"But You're Not a Social Worker Are You?"

To the stories. The first is about an Aboriginal worker in an agency that employs social workers. A new social worker arrived in town and the Aboriginal worker was asked by the Social Work Head of the Agency to introduce the newcomer to everything he would need to know about working in this particular place, being one where Aboriginal people were the overwhelming majority of the client population as well as comprising a very significant percentage of the total population.

The Aboriginal worker, realising how important it was for the local populace to deal with sensitive and aware social workers, took this task very seriously and spent considerable time thinking through an induction programme that would help orient the new workers' thinking to appropriate action. She tried to incorporate all that local knowledge essential for effective practice.

While anthropologists labour long and hard to acquire such knowledge and often earn Ph.D.s for their efforts, our Aboriginal worker gave this knowledge in the spirit of improving the work of her Agency. The social worker was taken to meet significant community people, given the history of the area and a rundown of the important factors underlying community dynamics. The local skin system was explained and its importance in understanding local interaction patterns demonstrated. Meetings were set up with local Aboriginal women so the worker could grasp their perspective on child protection issues.

It was, all in all, an extensive introductory knowledge package for any professional working in the region. The social worker expressed his gratitude.

FRAN CRAWFORD, Social Work Department, Curtin University,
Kent Street, Bentley W.A. 6102

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However some six months later as the social worker and the Aboriginal worker shared a coffee break, the social worker confided his disappointment at the quality of supervision given by the regional Head of their Agency. His main complaint was that he had been left to find his own way in the new job without an orientation programme. Our Aboriginal worker had to swallow hard but managed to ask whether the time spent with her had been useful. "Oh, yes of course", said our social worker, "but that doesn't count. You're not a social worker."

Spirals of Aboriginal Knowledge

The second story comes from the same town as the first. A now deceased Elder explained his people's view of the learning process as follows. He drew a small spiral in the sand. That represented the mother's womb. When you emerge from the womb you start learning; learning how to suck the mother's breast, learning how to hunt and so on. As you learn more, your spiral gets bigger, your world gets bigger. Aboriginal law kept people moving out further on that spiral. The more law you learn the richer your life gets and the bigger the spiral, the closer the link with the land.

However, when the children go down south for what the whitefellas insist is education, their spiral stops growing, starts to get smaller. They lose their law and begin to want material things. Aboriginal knowledge and ways of seeing the world are not recognised or understood by those the young people interact with in the big city. The young are forced to change their way of thinking. When they return home it is found that their spiral of life has been disrupted so that they are no longer equipped to take their proper place in their community.

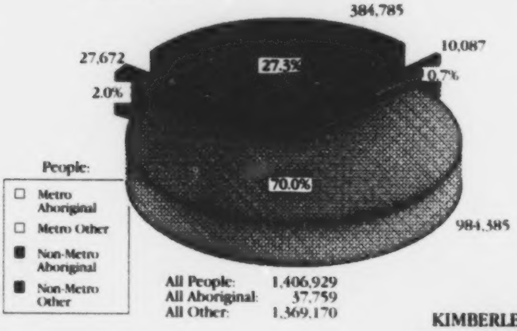
HOW SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE HAS 'SEEN' ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE

Social work knowledge in this State has been remarkably obtuse regarding the existence of Aboriginal knowledge. There are many interplaying reasons as to why this should be so, not the least of which are:

1. Non Aboriginal Australian ideologies about the meanings of Aboriginal, (this covers the whole host of stereotypes through which non-Aboriginal people approach any contact with Aboriginal people).
2. The relatively recent origins of social work as a profession in this State and its dependence on overseas conceived models and theories. In common with other professions, we have applied theory and content derived from other places without due consideration to the contextual factors unique to practice situations in the here and now.
3. The strong urban base of social work training and practice. (See Pie Charts on Where People Live in WA) Until quite recently there were very few social workers outside the metropolitan area and major regional centres. In contrast, until a major population move in the last twenty years, even more Aboriginals lived in rural settings than do now. This did limit the chance of interaction, especially outside the potentially limiting roles of social worker and client. (See Pie Charts for contrast in the proportions of Aboriginal — non-Aboriginal populations between the Kimberleys and the Metropolitan area).

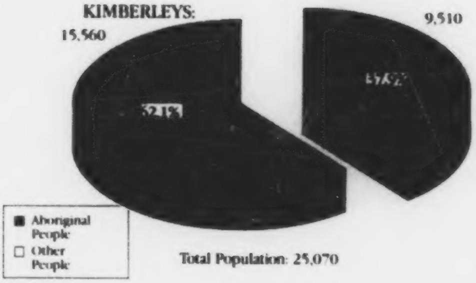
WHERE PEOPLE LIVE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA
June 30, 1986 Census

TOTAL STATE:



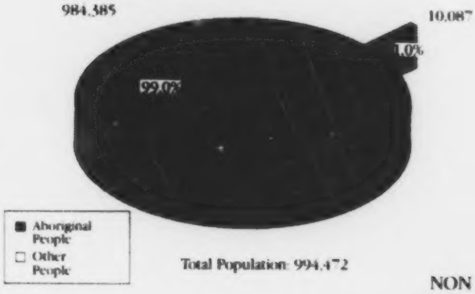
All People: 1,406,929
All Aboriginal: 37,759
All Other: 1,369,170

KIMBERLEYS:



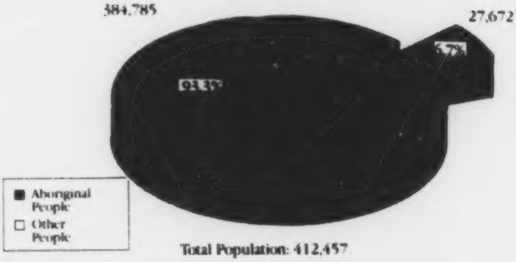
Total Population: 25,070

PERTH METRO:



Total Population: 994,472

NON METROPOLITAN:



Total Population: 412,457

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All these factors combine to produce a state of affairs in which social work knowledge about Aboriginal people in any ordered and formal sense hardly exists while social work action with Aboriginal people prevails out of all proportion to the percentage of the total population that is Aboriginal.

The recent Welfare and community Services Review in Western Australia reflects this situation. (Carter, 1984) Awareness of Aboriginal people and their realities is only peripherally present in the final report.

Planning proceeds as if everyone is basically just like 'us' — the main aim of social work being to address deficiencies by bringing everyone up to scratch. This is yet another manifestation of the cultural deficiency model that pervades in so many of the human service professions, where any idea of people living in varied realities is not addressed and where any understanding of history and location (time and place) in shaping present circumstances is missing. Thus, the impression is given that enough scientific research will unearth the right answer to get apathetic, misfit, dependents on track with the rest of us.

The Review states in its section on Aboriginal people, "We considered the relationship between welfare services and Aboriginal people to be a vital one to consider. However, our slender *resources* of limited time, low budget and few staff limited our consultations with Aboriginal people. New approaches to matters of Aboriginal welfare are a priority, since we estimated that a good half of the current clients of the Department for Community Welfare are Aboriginal and that patterns of dependence on welfare have been reproduced generation after generation."
(Carter 1984:31-32 my underline)

I would argue that the main resources lacking in this Review and in Western Australian social work generally when it comes to addressing Aboriginal issues, relate to the understanding of Aboriginal terms of reference. Further I would argue that until such resources are developed the profession of social work will remain distant, in its work with Aboriginal people, from its general goal of enabling and empowering people to lead self-satisfying lifestyles.

Two of the axioms of social work knowledge are

Starting where the client is at
Valuing all humans equally.

These have developed as the value based axis to social work practice throughout the world. They are the best Western traditions of democracy and humanitarianism. When it comes to their application to Aboriginal people however, these axioms appear to have been submerged by other more strident aspects of Western knowledge. Knowledge such as prevailing Western cultural beliefs that there is no other way than ours, the positivistic view that there is only one reality and that Aboriginals are culturally different only because they are trailing us in evolution. Such ethnocentric arrogance of course has been severely challenged but still pervades the taken-for-granted thinking of many of us. The worst manifestations of such an approach are seen in those human service professionals who claim that given enough money and research they will get to measure this reality and control it for the good of all.

It is my belief based on many years working and living with a diversity and complexity of people, including Aboriginal people, that social work has to be about starting where people are at if it is to value people equally. To do this it has to move away from the acultural, individualistic framework that underlies so many of the social work models and theories developed in America and the structuralist Marxist framework that flowered in the English experience of the 1970's. Social work in Western Australia has to become *West Australian* social work. We need practice that is grounded in the everyday realities of this place, including its history and its stories and beliefs. This must necessarily incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and does not preclude the inclusion of overseas knowledge evaluated to be appropriate for the Australian context.

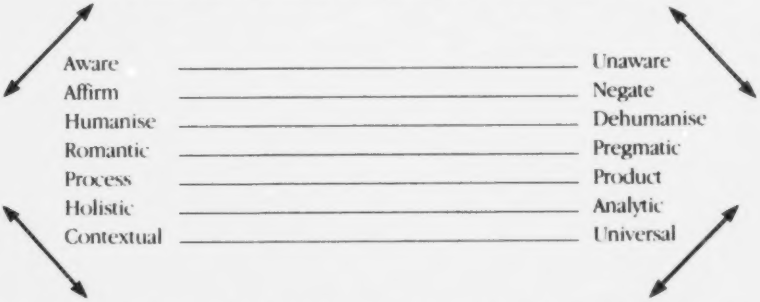
Aboriginal Knowledge: How is it Seen by the Wider Society?

At Curtin, those of us with an interest in increasing professional social workers' knowledge of Aboriginal issues saw as our task the opening up of existing social work knowledge frameworks to perspective taking. This would increase the chance of Aboriginal knowledge when given by Aboriginal people being 'seen' and 'heard' in its own terms. Message sent could more clearly remain message received instead of its being subsumed under what are believed to be greater truths. For example a non-Aboriginal response to an Aboriginal suggestion can be, "Thats all very well but the reality is that education must take place in a school."

From our debate as to how to open up existing knowledge frameworks, a multidimensional conceptual model emerged. This is simplistically diagrammed in Fig. 1. This model is not an explanatory one. It seeks to tease out and order some of the factors to be addressed in organising a curriculum that will prepare social workers to work effectively with Aboriginal people. It is an open model and only lists some of the possible dimensions. It is conceived as being constantly subject to revision depending upon feedback from practice.

Figure 1

ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE — DOES IT COUNT?
DIMENSIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE 'SEEING' AND 'HEARING'
OF ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE BY OUTSIDERS



With a dynamic, flashing light, three dimensional model, the interplay between these factors would be more easily conceived. This is an example of what happens to knowledge when reduced to the flat paper culture.

Details of Dimensions Identified in the 'Seeing' and 'Hearing' of Aboriginal Knowledge by the Wider Society

a) Awareness — un-awareness dimension

Community advisor who did not know what 'kartiya' meant after twelve months in a community where the cry of 'kartiya coming' traced his every move. To him everything was 'mumbo-jumbo' unless it was in English.

b) Affirmation — negation continuum

David Carnegie's 'Spinifex and Sand' (1982) contains good examples of how Aboriginal knowledge can be affirmed even as it is being negated. e.g. using Aboriginal knowledge to locate water but assuming this a once off need because the black race must inevitably fade before the superior powers of the white. Carnegie made his epic journey from Kalgoorlie to Halls Creek almost a century ago but the social Darwinism that supported his process of negation is with us yet.

c) Dehumanised — humanised continuum

There is a common belief that 'we' act as spontaneous individuals whereas 'traditional Aboriginal people' are but puppets held on a string by their culture. We are humans, subjects of our own actions, while Aboriginal people are objects. Both Black and feminist writings have clearly developed the oppressive consequences for those so objectified.

d) Romantic-pragmatic or ideal and real continuum

This relates closely to the previous dimension and a manifestation can often be seen in the newly qualified social worker, full of sympathy for the poor Aboriginal, who finds it hard to cope with the complex human realities found in practice. Unfortunately the outcome is often a retreat into dogma about Aboriginal people, (either positive or negative), remaining closed to input from experience.

e) Process — product

This relates to the materialism of our culture and its relative blindness to interaction and relationships. This point is developed in Kenneth Lieberman's 'Ethnomethodology of Aboriginal Interaction in Central Australia'. See in particular his description of an early morning camp scene and the wealth of interactional knowledge involved. Lieberman rightly points out the paucity of interactional data in the vast Western academic literature on things Aboriginal.

f) Holistic and analytic dimension

A story about Marge Spurling, my presenter here today and a fellow social worker, might serve to illustrate this point. The first essays I had to mark at Curtin were about the Family and the set question boiled down to 'Is the family a good or bad thing?' Of all the students' work, Marge's was the only one which concluded unequivocally that it was both at the same time. The either/or framework of Western thinking that has been so important to our scientific age can, in fact, be less than helpful in conceptualising the human condition. A more general example is the non-Aboriginal worry over whether an Aboriginal person is really an Aboriginal if they have a whitefella name, drive a car, or perhaps have less than observable blackfella genes. You can only be Aboriginal or not Aboriginal. Sally Morgan's "My

Place" has done a lot to raise peoples' awareness of the complexities transcending the black or white approach.

g) Contextual realities versus universal abstracts. Socially constructed truths and one true reality.

Social work manuals on how to recognise child neglect wherever it occurs on the basis of an acultural fixed checklist would be one manifestation along this dimension.

Curtin Initiative to Date

These dimensions are obviously interrelated and not exhaustive. The question is what have we done at Curtin about reading the current state of play between the dimensions, and targetting where we would like the state of play shifted to. In all our considerations we have been guided by the staff of Curtin's Aboriginal Studies Centre.

In terms of actual curriculum changes we have;

1. Ensured that all units address Aboriginal issues, preferably from an Aboriginal perspective, with the use of guest speakers as to date we have no Aboriginal staff.
2. Introduced a major culture stream into the three Behavioural Science units, which stresses the everyday cultural realities of all of us and not just Aboriginal people and migrants.
3. Introduced Community Development and Rural Social Work electives for 3rd and 4th Year, both of which significantly focus on Aboriginal issues.
4. Used West Australian Aboriginal literature such as "My Place", "Wandering Girl" and "No Sugar" to raise student consciousness as to the complexities of the issues.
5. Non-Aboriginal staff have lectured to students on the history of white control of the policy and administration of Aboriginal Affairs in this State, with the emphasis on understanding the nature of non-Aboriginal knowledge and ideologies about matters Aboriginal and how they have shaped our actions.
6. Endeavoured to recruit Aboriginal students into the course and have tried to make them feel they can build on and share their Aboriginal knowledge, rather than be expected to shed it if they are to emerge as 'proper' professionals.
7. Perhaps most effectively to date, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies and the School of Social work invited as a Visiting Fellow earlier this month, Lilla Watson, Lecturer in Aboriginal Knowledge from the Social Work Department at the University of Queensland. She has left behind, for students and staff, a wealth of visions and ideas.

Where to from Here?

That is about as far as our initiatives have taken us to date. An obvious next step is the appointment of Aboriginal staff. Though no decisive actions have yet been taken in this regard, I am optimistic about the future and feel that far beyond any of our actions there has been a marked shift in the wider society making it more receptive to Aboriginal knowledge. The first year I was at Curtin, (1984), was at the height of the Land Rights debate and there was a distinct lack of interest in Aboriginal issues,

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seemingly coloured by an either/or shaped belief that it is 'us' or 'them'. One student actually said, "Oh no, we're not going to talk about them again are we? We've already done three hours on them and we all know how awful it is but there is nothing for us to do. That's their business." Needless to say that student went on to take a job where she had significant control over the everyday lives of Aboriginal people.

Now at Curtin there is significant interest among the student body in Aboriginal issues and a small but significant number of Aboriginal students. Rather than an understanding of Aboriginal realities being conceived of as an esoteric tack-on to theory, the usefulness of theory in understanding Aboriginal situations is seen as a central test of any claims that theory might have to universality on the human condition. Along with gender issues, issues of race and culture are currently a very fertile ground for social thought.

There is more debate and awareness than I have experienced before of the existence of many social realities. More awareness of the interplay of power in everyday life and the unequal struggle each of us has to have 'our' definition of reality accepted as 'the' definition of reality. In Australia generally, the Australian Studies movement is recasting the frameworks through which we view ourselves. This gives Aboriginal people a far greater chance to be heard and counted. A chance to ensure that the decisions that will effect their lives start where they are 'at'.

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Chapter 7

A PRACTICAL LESSON

by Eric Hayward

Hedland College is located in North West W.A. There are 1700 Aboriginal people who live in the twin towns know as Hedland and South Hedland, where the College is situated. Hedland College is a community college and offers mostly TAFE level courses, but does contract tertiary courses for further education and university institutions.

Aboriginal people have diverse lifestyles in the region; some working for mining companies whilst others get jobs whenever they can. Unemployment is high, past educational opportunity rare — many having only primary levels of education and many have ties with surrounding communities. The law is still significant for some town people, whilst for others it is somewhat disregarded.

Hedland is extremely hot in summer when rain sometimes falls — often temperatures may reach the mid and high 40's, days on end.

The standard of living for many has reached comfortable levels, compared to the recent past, however many families rely on social welfare.

In the early 1960's the population was about 1500. Today through mainly the mining industry the population has grown by about 12 times.

Most older Aboriginal people have been pastoral workers but the industry employs but a few now.

I became employed as the Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Studies at the College in January 1987. As part of my teaching duties I was required to teach meeting procedure in the communication curriculum. I'd like to tell you about that teaching and how I'd changed my strategy because of looming failure.

The background to Hedland I've just given, may be important in as much as that it may enable you to appreciate the situation from the students' point of view.

The students in my class varied from basic literacy levels to perhaps mid secondary. It was unlikely that any would personally know an Aboriginal teacher let alone a sou-west one. It was an interesting setting.

As mentioned, in the Admission Studies course for Aborigines, the students were required to learn about meeting procedures. Very few of the students had ever been to a formal meeting and it is probably fair to say that they regarded the subject as dull, pointless and irrelevant. I was the Aboriginal lecturer who was trying to teach this subject in a formal manner. I wasn't succeeding — both myself and the students were frustrated and little progress was being made.

It came to a head towards the conclusion of one of the early two hour sessions. One of the students had been quite openly talking to another for some time, obviously attracting the attention of everybody in the class. I gave enough non-verbal cues to indicate that I was not happy with the behaviour but it still persisted.

ERIC HAYWARD, Hedland College, P.M.B. 1, South Hedland W.A. 6722

I bawled the student out by saying "look Johnny, if you're not interested in the lesson you can get out".

Johnny quietened down for a short time but very soon returned to early behaviour. I spoke to him after class and was told that he was finding it very difficult to hack it.

In the class was an Aboriginal Teacher Aide. She approached me after the lesson and advised me that most students were becoming turned off. As a consequence I gave a great deal of thought about how the teaching of meeting procedure might be made more relevant to the students. I wanted to provide the difficult terminology with practical meaning and set the learning in a real world context.

I could now appreciate the difficulty of students to grapple with words like: constitution, motions, amendments, resolutions, minutes, seconding, scrutineer; and phrases like: point of order, standing, ad hoc, and sub-committees. Something had to be done.

While these goals were quite clear, it took some time to decide on the teaching methodology which should be employed. A method was needed which would make the lessons more interesting and relevant to the students. The method adopted had to ensure the students learnt about meetings and how they are formally conducted.

It was realised that without the commitment of the students no teaching method or strategy was likely to succeed. Consequently I decided to negotiate the method employed with the students. It was considered vital for the students to share responsibility for the course. I made a proposal to the class: if they would start a student group with specific goals and hold formal meetings in class, then I would change my teaching style.

I proposed that the lecturing part of the lesson would be reduced; the practical component of the lesson would be at least half of the two hour lesson; and at the end of the semester an event would be planned, organised and run by the students. I thought it was an attractive offer. Another essential element of the proposal was that the students had to raise funds to pay for the function. The students readily agreed to this proposal, probably not realising the hard work and effort which was entailed. In essence it was a contract between students and teacher.

The students decided to call their group the 'Yarrie' student group. Office bearers were elected and students were now keen to know all of the duties of each position. There were so many questions that a series of mini lessons had to be given on the role of the office bearers, the need to write down motions, how motions were put together, voting, rules of debate, and more.

While some of this material had been taught previously, students were now interested in learning. They now had an immediate and practical reason to learn.

There was a lot of discussion between myself and the students on how to raise funds. It was eventually decided to run a Quiz Night. I then explained the things that had to be done. As well, one other college lecturer came in to talk about Quiz Nights and to give the students encouragement. The students were confronted with all of the questions associated with organising the kind of function they selected. They had to consider:

1. Where should it be held?
2. What's the best date to hold it?
3. Who should be the compere?
4. How do we approach people for donations?
5. Will local businesses give donations?
6. How will we advertise the event?
7. Who will put posters up, and where?
8. How much should tickets be?
9. How much money do we need to raise?

These questions had to be discussed in the class meetings. A meeting of 30 people can't deal with every issue and it became obvious that sub-committees were needed. When the meeting decided to put up posters around the town, or ask for donations for the Quiz Night, tasks had to be allocated. I was able to guide the students and teach them something about planning strategies and allocating tasks. I attempted to allocate tasks fairly and to make the students aware that they would achieve their goals if they operated as a cohesive team — all contributing to the best of their ability.

Some students lacked confidence. They were apprehensive when approaching local businesses for support. They felt that business people had a negative stereotype image of Aborigines. Because I was Aboriginal I could identify and understand their feelings and was able to give the students confidence. I encouraged students to make phone calls, write letters, discuss their plans with members of the community, and to seek business support. Despite all of the encouragement, some students lacked the confidence to equally share in these activities, but other students coped very well, developed greater self confidence and felt good about the results of their efforts. Students approached approximately one hundred businesses for support. They were stunned and delighted when they found that more than 50 businesses donated something. However for each student it was a daunting task to ask for donations.

At each meeting groups of students were encouraged to report what they had achieved. As in any organisation or committee, some people contribute a lot and some people contribute very little. I made no attempt to pressure students to work hard. Instead I praised those who were working hard and emphasised that success is only guaranteed when everyone in a team contributes.

The Quiz night made the local Aboriginal community a little bit more aware of what the College was doing. The actual night went quite smoothly. Students collected and sold tickets at the door, arranged the furniture, handed out the prizes, and one student thanked the audience for coming. Students of the College's Hospitality Course served drinks and put sandwiches on each table.

Because the students were successful in raising money, they were able to run an excursion at the end of the semester. As a group they decided to hire a bus and go to Point Sampson (about 200km south). They also wanted to challenge the students at Roebourne to a game of softball. The excursion and the sporting match were very enjoyable and on the trip there was a feeling of unity, cohesiveness and satisfaction. Their work had been successful and their ideas had been put into effect.

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It would be misleading to suggest that all of the students gained a lot from the course. Some students became very keen, active and outspoken, while others didn't put in much effort. Those who accepted the challenge learnt about organising, dealing with people, effectively communicating their ideas by letter, phone and in person. They definitely learnt a lot about meeting procedure and team work.

At Hedland College we aren't pretending that we have all of the answers. Students still wanted me to provide the leadership and they didn't always understand that I was trying to foster their independence and self direction. In some areas students were reluctant to take responsibility, e.g. finance. What I am saying is that in one area of the curriculum our 'practical lessons' worked. We believe that we have established a firm foundation for future student activities.

Chapter 8

TEACHING READING TO ABORIGINAL ADULTS FROM TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

by Bill Langlands

Despite the fact that most adults from traditionally oriented Aboriginal communities can see little point in learning to read there is a small core who, for a variety of reasons, want to do so. What do teachers involved in teaching or planning courses need to know about Aborigines to effectively help them to read? It would seem that Aborigines differ fundamentally in their learning styles, world view and ways of thinking from whites. For this reason traditionally oriented Aboriginal adults face a number of problems in learning to read. Many have regarded reading as an essentially meaningless school "ritual". Their cultural ways of learning have not included certain formal purposeful strategies necessary to develop reading for meaning. As reading instruction begins there is need to use informal teaching strategies and provide students with culturally and linguistically appropriate material. As instruction proceeds progressively more difficult material can be used along with teaching strategies that help Aboriginal students to alter their functional learning system by adding formal learning behaviours that will enable them to learn meaningfully from text.

The ability to read and write is an important value for middle class white Australians like myself. To be able to read is considered "natural". There may even be a tendency to think there is something unnatural or strange about someone who can't read and write. Schools teach a subject "reading", giving it prominence as a skill of great value. Australian Aboriginal societies on the other hand were traditionally oral communicators. One might think that the long contact with white society has changed Aborigines, causing them to value the ability to communicate in writing. However, even where little traditional culture seems to remain, Aborigines still rely mainly on oral language for interpersonal and inter-community communication. A study by Fesl (1982) among the Aborigines of three communities in Victoria and New South Wales showed that these relatively non-traditional groups had "little or no interest in literacy tuition" (48) and that "literacy ability . . . has little value as a skill in Aboriginal society". The most important needs of Aboriginal people which centre on relationships with kinsfolk, their land and the world of the spirit, are met, as they always have been, through oral communication.

It is not surprising, then, that in more traditional Aboriginal communities, where the people have only come in contact with literacy much more recently, there is not a general interest in learning to read and write. In some communities, however, there are those who express an interest in learning to communicate through text. Some are aware of the ongoing culture loss being experienced by their people and are interested

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BILL LANGLANDS, Summer Institute of Linguistics,
Australian Aborigines and Islanders Branch, P.O. Berrimah, N.T. 0828

in documenting history and stories before they are lost. Some are, or want to become, teachers in community education programs. For this work they need to be able to read, sometimes both in their vernacular as well as in English. Some of these folk also want to be able to study so that they can gain full teaching credentials. Others are interested in studying the Bible in their own language or in English. Still others, increasingly aware that literacy is important for political reasons, want to be able to deal with those outside their culture — politicians, government officials and non-Aboriginal community workers. These Aborigines want to gain information from letters, news reports and documents, and to be able to respond in writing to outsiders. So there is, as I observe it, a small but growing group interest in literacy. This means that more and more teacher linguists, adult educators, tutors and others are responsible for providing reading instruction for Aboriginal adults in communities where much of traditional culture and language still remains. What is more, these individuals requesting instruction will not be satisfied with the very basic literacy ability generally present in most remote communities. They are wanting literacy to be a tool they can use for their own and their people's ends.

This paper first tries to summarise some of the things that instructors will need to know about their Aboriginal students in order to effectively help them to develop the purposeful literacy skills they are seeking. Secondly the likely problems Aboriginal students may face in becoming literate are examined. The final section of the paper outlines the reading teaching strategies and activities that will help traditionally oriented Aboriginal adults to learn to use literacy purposefully.

WHAT ADULT LITERACY TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

In recent years there has been quite a lot of research that has looked at educationally significant differences between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. Work has focussed on the Aboriginal view of reality (Bain 1979), cognitive development (Dasen 1973, 1975; Seagrim and Lendon 1976, 1980; Klich and Davidson 1984), learning styles and modes of learning behaviour (Davidson 1977; Harris 1977, 1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1984; Christie 1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1984a, 1984b, 1985). There have also been attempts to develop literature based on the prior knowledge and interests of Aboriginal people (Russo 1981; Russo and Harris 1982; Nicholls 1984) and to emphasise the functional aspects of reading, and other areas of classroom learning (Davidson 1983; Christie 1982a, 1983; Harris 1984). Most of this work has been with children, although some writers have attempted to apply findings to work with Aboriginal adults (McGrath 1983).

Aborigines have a way of looking at the world that is radically different from non-Aborigines

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people view the world differently, and it is reasonable to assume that these differences need to be understood in any attempts to introduce to Aboriginal people the new skills of literacy. According to Margaret Bain (1979: 372-392), Aboriginal people and white people are brought up through childhood to use mental processes, language and language structures in ways that are very different. These differences mean that Aboriginal people and white people think about and talk about the world from quite different perspectives (Seagrim and Lendon 1980: 181-213). The basic difference between the two world views is that the non-Aboriginal sees the world in terms of impersonal, objective and quantifiable *transactions*, while the Aboriginal sees it in terms of *relationships*. Bain (1979: 374) lists several important points about these two very different ways of looking at the world which are summarised below.

> Firstly, the white man sees his world as consisting of things logically related by impersonal causes and effects. The Aboriginal on the other hand sees the things in his world are as related to eternal spiritual persons such as, for example, crow or kangaroo. So, says Bain, when an Aboriginal man says that a particular area of land is his mother, he is speaking literally and in a way quite inaccessible to the Western mind.
>
> Secondly, the notion of more or less, that is, of quantity and the quantifiable, is not only irrelevant but contrary to the Aboriginal view of the world.
>
> Thirdly, for the Aboriginal person, social interaction is not bound by the present historical moment. Creative ancestors, totemic beings and deceased relatives are all present, although mostly unseen, among those who can be seen not only in ceremonies but also in everyday life.
>
> Fourthly, for an Aboriginal, much of what goes on in the seen world can be explained in terms of interaction between people and the unseen world. This view of reality enables the Aboriginal person to explain the transcendent but is so different from the white person's way of looking at the world that when the two come together they totally misunderstand each other. In the same way that the average whitefella's world view causes him to miss altogether much of what the Aboriginal person sees, so the Aboriginal person's perspective on life prevents him from understanding the physical world in logically and objectively related quantifiable units as the non-Aboriginal does.

In her research Bain explores the main ways that these differing world views clash (1979: 387-392). Christie (1984: 9) looks at three of her conclusions most relevant to the education setting. I have summarised these points below.

> That Aboriginal thinking is tied to their immediate experience and to their ways of putting things into categories. They have difficulty with hypothetical questions.
>
> That the Aboriginal view of the world inhibits ideas of causation number and conservation (the ability to understand that things that have changed in some ways, for example, in shape, are still the same as they were before in other ways).
>
> That the way of looking at the world which the Aboriginal has learnt makes it hard for him to build up in his mind the same kinds of ways of classifying or grouping things together that are very important in the early stage of the non-Aboriginals cognitive development.

The culture and language of both Aborigines and non-Aborigines shapes the way they do mental tasks

The Swiss psychologist Piaget and other researchers have studied how children learn to classify objects according to their properties and how they learn to understand

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relationships between classes and subclasses of concrete objects (or objects tied closely to the concrete). This stage of thinking is called "concrete operational thinking". A later stage of thinking, that of "formal operational thinking", involves the ability to classify and work mentally with ideas that are imaginery, hypothetical and not tied to the concrete. Research with Aboriginal children and studies comparing their development to that of white children show that a large proportion of Aborigines do not learn either the concrete operational nor the formal operational ways of thinking. For these people these stages are not arrived at in childhood nor in adulthood. (Dasen 1973). Seagrim and Lendon (1980) conclude that this is because the different ways of thinking as described by Piaget, are in fact taught to us by our culture, and that people don't usually say things in their languages or think in ways that don't fit in with what their culture has taught them. Because these stages of thinking are required in mathematics it seems that the introduction of numeracy is likely to threaten Aboriginal culture "at its very roots" (Seagrim and Lendon 1980: 212). Seagrim and Lendon comment that it does not seem that the development of literacy will produce such problems. However, from other research, especially that from Michael Christie (1984), it seems that the development of a high degree of literacy skill could very well produce some very radical changes in Aboriginal mental processes.

Most Aboriginal learning is done informally in contrast to non-Aboriginal school learning

From his research at Milingimbi, Stephen Harris (1977, 1980) described traditional ways Aborigines learn. Other studies from very different areas and among different groups support his findings (Harris 1984, Christie 1984b). These ways of learning are "informal" in nature and contrast markedly with those used in the "formal" Western classroom. Each society, it seems, has its own ways of promoting learning that ensures effective living within that society. The Aboriginal ways are functional for the kinds of learning Aborigines traditionally needed to live effectively in their society. The five major ways Harris lists are summarised here:

> Learning by "observation and imitation" rather than through verbal instruction, as most formal classroom learning is done. The bulk of Aboriginal learning — survival skills, social skills, art, dance, music is best done this way.
>
> Learning by "personal trial and error" rather than through verbal instruction and demonstration. Aborigines learn by doing.
>
> Learning by "real life performance" rather than by practice in contrived settings.
>
> Learning "by wholes". There is little focus on sequencing and learning parts of skills. Rather there is a strong tendency to learn the whole. So, for example, the whole dance is performed. Mastery is accomplished "by successive approximations of the efficient end product".
>
> Problems are solved by "persistence and repetition". (Harris 1984: J4-5)

The learning styles used in white society are in marked contrast to those outlined above. Even before they begin formal classroom learning, white children are taught by parents to respond to verbal instructions and to ask and answer questions. These kinds of learning behaviour are part of the formal learning which they will encounter in the classroom. Formal learning has been described by various researchers (Scribner and Cole 1973; Harris 1977, 1984; Christie 1982a, 1983, 1984b, 1986). According to these authors this kind of learning is:

"Decontextualised" and has little to do with immediate everyday life and survival.

"Heavily dependent on words", both spoken and written, because it is largely learning out of the real-life context.

"Conscious", in that people doing it are mostly aware that they are involved in a learning task.

Often carried out by the "sequencing of parts of a skill or a body of knowledge", and learning them part by part until the whole is mastered.

Often planned and supervised to some extent by a teacher.

Christie (1982a, 1983, 1984b, 1986) calls this kind of formal learning behaviour "purposeful learning". He points out that purposeful learning requires:

A goal which is consciously and accurately identified by the learner before effective learning takes place. This is in contrast to informal learning where the learning is incidental and the goal is the performance of the activity. Christie discovered that Aboriginal children in a formal setting will often not see the learning goal. For them the goal may be "to please the teacher" (Christie 1980) or "to get a page full of ticks" or "to go through the classroom activities as a kind of pleasant ritual". They miss the real learning goals of these activities (Christie 1983).

Judgement, helping the learner monitor his progress towards the known goal. Feedback, to ensure that he can do this, is provided in a formal learning environment. A student who has learned to monitor his own progress will be able to reflect on what he has learnt, acknowledge his errors and accept correction, and continue with further learning after initial success.

Internal or personal control. The formal learner willingly and consciously directs and regulates his or her own learning behaviour. Frequently, according to Christie, Aboriginal students will wait passively, expecting the teacher to give them learning (1984b). When he questioned students about how to learn well Christie got answers like "sit down", "listen to the teacher", "be quiet". His upbringing has not taught the Aboriginal student that he can make learning happen by trying and thinking.

PROBLEMS ABORIGINAL ADULTS MAY FACE IN DEVELOPING MEANING MAKING LITERACY SKILLS

Not knowing what reading is

Researchers and writers like Goodman (1975, 1976a, 1976b), Smith (1978, 1979) and Latham and Sloan (1979) view reading as a psycholinguistic process whereby a reader reconstructs as best he can from a visual code the writer's meaning. (A listener uses a similar process for deriving meaning from an oral code.) Language, according to these writers, has two levels: "surface structure", that is the sounds or written representation, and "deep structure", that is, meaning. The two are related by a system of rules called syntax or grammar. The meaning (deep structure) of a written or spoken discourse (surface structure) is ascertained by the reader or hearer not only through sounds or graphic representations, but also from the way in which the words, sentences and larger units of language are related to each other by these rules. The rules of language use are learnt informally during childhood in the context of everyday experience (Camboume 1984). The ability to recreate meaning from the spoken or written language code depends upon the ability to associate internalised concept or meaning schemes, "the world in the head" as Smith (1978: 79) calls it, developed through experience, with this code.

According to Goodman (1976a), in effect, reading is a "psycholinguistic guessing game", an active purposeful process in which the reader uses as much graphic information as he needs (how much will depend on how familiar the reader is with vocabulary, ideas and language patterns used) in combination with semantic and syntactic information to decide what the writer means.

> "The efficient reader (like the efficient listener) engages in a process involving sampling, predicting, testing and confirming: thus relying on strategies that yield the most reliable prediction with the minimum use of information available." (Cairney 1982: 32)

In their oral culture Aborigines have minimal exposure to literature and few models of reading. Those who have experienced reading instruction have often been taught by inappropriate methods. Few have leant what real reading is. Many, as Christie suggests (1983), view it as a kind of meaningless school "ritual". It is essential that the strategies used to teach Aboriginal adults provide them, from the beginning, with an understanding of what reading really is. (Harris 1982a)

Culturally and linguistically unfamiliar reading materials

Readers depend heavily on their own knowledge of the world as well as language when they are making meaning from text (Smith 1978: 50-100; Pearson and Johnson 1978; Latham and Sloan 1979: 26-52). This knowledge is largely determined by a person's cultural affiliation. Culturally and linguistically unfamiliar material will be more difficult to understand. At the base of such difficulties, in the case of non-Aboriginal authored material being used by Aborigines, lie not minor differences in detail but the radically different world views of the two societies. That these kinds of difficulties are experienced by Aboriginal readers has been demonstrated in several studies cited by Davidson (1983). Harris (1982a), while acknowledging this difficulty, points out that if people only ever read material that is culturally and linguistically familiar, they will never develop new schemata (mental systems developed by and used in learning) and be able to read and understand more widely. Some possible ways of dealing with the problems created by linguistically and culturally unfamiliar reading materials are discussed in the next section of this paper.

World view and learning styles

A further problem traditional Aboriginal adults face when learning to read is that their culture socialises them to learn almost exclusively by informal means. Language and survival skills, knowledge about the bush and many other things are learnt without anyone ever consciously planning a program to teach these and without the learner ever setting out to consciously learn them. It is not that these things just "happen naturally". In fact, Aboriginal society, from early childhood, puts social pressure on the individual to learn these functional skills (Harris 1984).

Similar pressures exist in whitefella society. Here social pressures ensure that white children learn the skills they need to function in their society. Much of this learning is done in informal ways similar to those used in Aboriginal society. However, the majority of white children also learn, before they ever come to school, the foundations of the kind of purposeful formal learning that they will do when they go to school.

From Harris' (1982a, 1982b, 1984) and Christie's (1982a, 1983, 1984b, 1986) work it is clear that if Aboriginal adults are going to be able to read-to-learn they need in the process to learn-to-learn formally or as Christie puts it, "purposefully". Furthermore it seems that these differences in learning styles are part of a complex of interrelated factors including radically differing ways of viewing reality (Bain 1979) and difference in cognitive development (Seagrim and Lendon 1980) which together make up the fundamental differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. If they are to learn to use literacy skills in meaningful ways, as some now seem to want, Aboriginal adults may need to be prepared to make some very real changes to the way they learn and think and perhaps to the way they view the world.

Motivation and the ethical implications of learning to read purposefully

The final problem to be singled out here is that of motivation. A fundamental prerequisite of learning to read is "wanting to read" (Sloan and Latham 1981: 50). This paper began by pointing out that "literacy ability . . . has little value as a skill in Aboriginal society". Beside this some writers have indicated that Aborigines, for example the Aranda (Seagrim and Lendon 1980: 211) and the Pitjantjatjara (Snowden 1981), have resisted formal schooling because they, consciously or perhaps sub-consciously, sense that if they or their families take part in it seriously it will change them radically. For this reason there seems little point in mounting large scale adult literacy programs. Those who have a purpose for learning to read (Christie 1986) should be the ones with whom adult literacy workers focus their attention. If, however, becoming purposefully literate as distinct from being "ritual readers" is likely to result in some profound changes in the fundamental thinking and learning processes of Aborigines, and there is much evidence that it will, are there not some ethical issues to be worked through before teachers embark on such programs? Teachers need to be aware that they are not just teaching a skill, but are in fact catalysts of what could be profound change. It is vital that literacy workers develop a sensitivity to the reactions of those they are assisting in literacy learning. Aboriginal adults must not be coerced to learn to read and should be able to select materials they feel are appropriate and reject meaningless and offensive materials.

By far the best way to ensure culturally sensitive reading education, both for adult Aborigines and children, would be to train traditional Aboriginal people as teachers. Recently several writers have made this point and some teacher training institutions are trying to make it possible (Sherwood 1982; Harris, Graham and Buschenhofen 1984; Harris, Graham and Odling-Smee 1985). The difficulty of the task faced by these

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institutions and by trainee teachers should not be minimised. In order to be able to stimulate the development of meaningful literacy among their people, Aboriginal teachers will need to learn to think and to learn in ways that are quite foreign to them.

WHAT STRATEGIES SHOULD BE USED IN TEACHING LITERACY TO ABORIGINAL ADULTS

Some general principles

The foundational principle of all teaching applies, that is, begin where the learners are. To ensure that students understand that reading is not a "meaningless ritual", they need to begin learning to read in the language with which they are most familiar, using reading materials that reflect their culturally conditioned view of the world.

Right from the early lessons students should be using materials that are meaningful and related to their motivations for learning to read. Reading outside of the class context should be encouraged in every possible way. As soon as possible students should choose their own materials. It is most likely that teachers will need to develop literature for their students, especially if the vernacular is being used. Even if English is used, the amount of material that fits the criteria above and is of real interest to the student will be very small. The non-existence or scarcity of materials in any language continues to make the whole exercise of reading-to-learn unrealistic and unattainable until Aboriginal authorship is taken seriously. Finding ways to meet this enormous need requires immediate creative attention.

Wendell (1982: 19-20) discusses the need to develop indigenous authors to write for their people. She distinguishes four stages of reading difficulty (from most predictable to least predictable) according to the familiarity of author and student with the content:

(1) Content completely familiar to both author and reader.
(2) Content unfamiliar but experienced by the author.
(3) Content unfamiliar experienced vicariously by author.
(4) Content unfamiliar translated from another language.

Aboriginal students should begin learning to read on stage one material and gradually progress to stage four material.

The ideas in the material should be discussed and reflected upon with the student. In other words, the reading lesson should be a language experience rather than just a decoding lesson, although decoding is of course a prerequisite to interacting meaningfully with text. An important goal of the lesson will be to create a forum for using language, especially questioning, in such a way as to encourage the development of the kind of imaginative and hypothetical thinking students will need to develop if they are to read-to-learn.

Teachers will need constantly to model purposeful reading — for enjoyment, humour, current events, history, curiosity or whatever turns the student on. As students become more purposeful in their learning it may help if teachers explain to students how they are teaching reading and the goals of each lesson.

Lessons should be conducted in a way that enables students right from the beginning to make continuous use of the primary meaning-making strategies (sampling, predicting, testing, confirming, correcting).

Writing, because it forces a student to take personal control, should be part of the curriculum from the very beginning. It is vital that this, too, be constantly modelled.

The object of any teaching/learning activity used should be finding meaning. Games that have winning as the object may distract students from the real goal of the activity.

Formal word study (phonics, spelling, punctuation and dictionary skills) and handwriting should not be taught during purposeful reading and creative writing lessons, but reserved as distinctly separate exercises. The teacher must ensure that only useful and applicable exercises are given. And the student must understand that these exercises have a purpose, namely to develop skills in independent problem solving. As the teacher explains and models their usefulness in meaningful literacy sessions, the usefulness of exercises should be readily apparent to the students. The importance of phonic (graphonic) knowledge in learning to read and especially to write should not be underestimated. It is often a useful tool in the meaning-making process. The consistency of the phonemic orthographies of many Aboriginal languages makes the use of grapho-phonic information a less frustrating process than with English.

Teaching strategies for pre-reading and beginning stages

Most non-literate Aboriginal adults do not understand what reading is. Before they learn to read they must make the discovery that white children usually make while sitting on dad's knee and being read to, that is, "Those marks on the page somehow represent meaningful language". This understanding is fundamental. Without it students will only ever be "ritual readers". For this reason beginning reading will best be taught using a combination of the Language Experience (LE), the Shared Book (SB) and the Neurological Impress strategies (NI). These teaching strategies most resemble the informal learning styles of Aborigines, so students will feel comfortable with them. All of these strategies focus on meaning rather than decoding and thus help students to find out right away what real reading is like. All of these strategies have the capacity, as students are ready for them to begin development of purposeful learning, that is to help students set learning goals, use feedback and exert personal control. In the white classroom these strategies build upon the purposeful learning behaviour students began to learn in their homes. In the Aboriginal classroom they should be part of an intentionally structured climate in which purposeful learning can be added to the non-formal functional learning system of the Aboriginal. Teachers should therefore expect Aboriginal students to find these strategies useful for a much longer time than non-Aboriginal students.

Language experience strategies

There are several variations of the LE strategy. These are explained in detail in, for example, Sloan and Latham's book *Teaching Reading Is* . . . (1981: 89-123). The most significant strengths of this strategy are (pp.91-92):

(a) Students read their own natural language, based upon their own meaningful experiences. (b) There are no difficulties in predicting meaning or understanding concepts. The text is semantically and syntactically matched to each participant. The reading material in this case, according to Wendell's criteria, is the easiest of stage one. (c) The approach can be used with individuals, groups and whole classes and it is economical because it requires no books. (d) It is suitable for all age groups. (e) It enables a sight vocabulary to be developed rapidly. (f) It can be used in conjunction with other strategies and provides an easy transition to the formal reading of books.

Basically the approach consists of the following steps: have an experience, discuss the experience (often built around an illustration or photograph), generate an oral text, the teacher and/or the student write text, the student reads the LE text (preceded as necessary by prompts from the teacher), question-answer with substantiation by the student from the text (a very important part of the strategy if students are to learn to search the text rather than the experience for meaning), development of a word bank leading to rapid acquisition of useful sight vocabulary, and finally the student sharing the story with others. There are numerous helpful variations on this strategy as given for example in Osmond (1984: 23-27) and Langlands (1985).

Shared book strategies

SB strategies described in detail by Holdaway (1979) and Sloan and Latham (1981: 113-116) involve the preparation of a book with highly predictable, often repetitive text. In Aboriginal oral literature, dreamtime legends, songs and many hunting stories have such structure. The group and teacher read the text several times. This is followed by a variety of oral cloze procedures where the group and/or individuals are asked to predict what comes next (the word or phrase covered). This encourages them to use their syntactical and semantic knowledge and develops primary meaning-making skills. Big books, overhead projectors, charts of the text which can be cut up and reassembled are all aids used with SB approaches. Questions and answers, with oral substantiations from the text as in LE, are also a vital aspect of this approach for developing student ability. The instructor models good questioning, by asking a variety of closed or open questions of the text. There are many variations of this strategy; for example see Osmond (1984: 34) and Langlands (1985).

Neurological impress method and related strategies

The NIM, lap or repeated reading strategy (Sparber 1979) is ideally a one student to one teacher approach but can also be used in groups with a teacher or using taped material. The strategy entails the student following out loud (echoing) the teachers or a recorded oral reading of a text while following the text. In this way the text is read through several times. Christie's article "Fluent reading in ten easy lessons" (1982) describes a variation of this approach using cassette recordings of books to help slow readers improve their reading skills and learn purposefully. With this approach, students can "read" interesting, meaningful text immediately and sight vocabulary grows rapidly. NIM can be used from pre-reading through to fluent reading stages. Variations of NI using oral cloze and question-answer with substantiation from the text are helpful in developing purposeful learning.

Teaching strategies for developing independent reading-to-learn

The strategies listed above contain some elements that begin to move students in the direction of purposeful independent reading-to-learn. The following strategies focus much more strongly on this. These strategies will be quite foreign and even offensive to the Aboriginal student as they will "force" him to learn and think in ways that he does not normally use in his culture and language.

Predicted substantiated silent discourse reading strategy (PSSDR)

This group strategy (Sloan and Latham 1981: 143-152) is similar to strategies described by Osmond (1985: 34-36) for use with non-Aboriginal adults and to that used by Tharp (1981, 1982) and Au (1981) in Hawaii. A variation of PSSDR, called Individual Reading (IR) to be used with individuals, is also outlined by Sloan and Latham (1981: 163-168). All could be described as "direct teaching of comprehension" strategies. In PSSDR a short text, one that can be read in five to ten minutes, is used. Students then anticipate the content of the text from title, illustrations, first sentence and/or paragraph. Their predictions are discussed. Students are then reminded of what to do if they come to an unknown word (guess, read around, substitute, leave out, insert nonsense word). Next the teachers asks an open discourse question, one that will aid the student in exploring the meaning of the whole discourse. The student then reads the whole text silently in order to answer the question. Unknown words are marked and may be worked on in word study sessions later. The discourse question is then discussed. All answers are received, correct or otherwise. Then in the next step of the strategy a variety of other questions, both closed and open in nature, are asked. As many students as possible give oral answers and substantiate from the text by oral reading. Those students who miscue are helped to self-correct by hearing the other students give substantiations for their answers to the same questions. Dramatic oral reading of the text may then be undertaken. After this strategy is being effectively used the Re Quest strategy should be introduced.

Re Quest strategy (RQS)

This strategy is described by Lewis Larking (1984). Both students and teacher read a text silently. Students then ask questions of the teacher about the passage. The teacher then takes a turn at asking questions, being careful to provide good question models. A variety of question types can be introduced in this way. This strategy will help Aboriginal students to develop questioning behaviours which are not naturally part of their culture (Christie 1984) and to be able to relate to text in a questioning way.

Uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR)

This strategy requires students and teacher to choose their own books and read uninterrupted for periods of up to half an hour. In this strategy the teacher and other students provide models of silent, self-controlled purposeful reading. The strategy is difficult to implement unless there is a good selection of reading material available. (Christie 1983: 72; Sloan and Latham 1981: 31-36)

Discussion aided analytical reading strategy (DAAR)

This strategy, described by Sloan and Latham (1981: 242-244), could be of use with, for example, Aboriginal teacher trainees studying texts or for group Bible studies. The strategy is identical to PSSDR except that following the discussion of the discourse question, students work from work sheets in small discussion groups. On the work sheets are several questions, say up to six, with spaces provided for writing out an

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answer. Students all read the same text and make notes of their answers to the questions. Answers are shared, substantiated from the text and discussed. Finally the group agrees upon an answer to the questions together.

Reading study strategies

There are several strategies described by Sloan and Latham (1981: 251-254) as individual study strategies, for example SQ3R (Survey, question, read, write, review). These strategies like PSSDR and DAAR encourage students to predict meaning, question text, read for answers to questions, write answers and reconstruct meaning, now that input has been obtained from the text. SQ3R type strategies have limited use for Aborigines but students who wish to further their education may need to learn to use such strategies. There may also be ways of adapting this approach for Bible study with individual study leading on to group discussion and application of concepts learned.

Writers such as Holdaway (1979) and Sloan and Latham (1981) suggest numerous activities that may be helpful in teaching Aboriginal students to learn reading for meaning. The most useful of these would include:

- sentence reconstruction
- sentence expansion
- many kinds of oral and written cloze activities
- information matching activities
- finding small words in larger ones
- many different kinds of Bingo and card games

CONCLUSION

Learning to read-to-learn is likely to have a profound effect on the way Aborigines see the world, learn and think. Modern approaches to teaching reading such as Language Experience, Shared Book and Neurological Impress Method may be effective tools in beginning the process of teaching Aboriginal adults to read to learn. Other approaches of a more formal nature, like Predicted Substantiated Silent Discourse Reading and Discussion Aided Analytical Reading, can continue this process. These will be effective with Aboriginal adults as they are with whites because they are essentially strategies developed to teach reading as a meaning-making process. Teachers of traditionally oriented Aboriginal adults need to understand, however, that as these strategies are used effectively with their students they will be doing far more than teaching reading. They will, in effect, be assisting students to reshape their learning styles.

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Chapter 9

KARRAYILI* (BAYULU)

by Barry Lennard

Introduction

- Bayulu Karrayili school started up after the town school in Fitzroy Crossing.
- Bayulu is about 17 kms from Fitzroy Crossing, so it is too far for people to travel in to town every day.
- Some people don't have a drivers licence or a motor car which makes it difficult for them to travel to town.
- It was decided to build a school at Bayulu.
- It is a small school. We have put in a submission to the government to make the building bigger. We are still waiting to hear about this.

The women's class. *Photo by Sue McGinty*

- We do two different sorts of things at Bayulu Karrayili.
- Younger women, from the community, have a silkscreening business at Bayulu. Seven women are employed under the Community Development Project, to print their own designs on t-shirts.

BARRY LENNARD, Bayulu Community, P.O. Box 44, Fitzroy Crossing W.A. 6765

* "Karrayili" is a Walmajarri word meaning a gathering of adults for law and education.

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- We sell the shirts at the local Fitzroy supermarket and an Aboriginal operated store. This year we will be sending shirts to the York Fair to sell them.
- The girls enjoy having the silkscreening workshop at the community. They do not have to travel in to town, but can work at something they enjoy at their own community.
- They also have something to do with their time.
- They earn money from the Community Development Employment Project and from commission on t-shirts they sell.
- Older people at the community come to school to learn to read and write the English language. They also learn about numbers and maths.
- At the moment it is women who come to the school most often.

The people who come to Bayulu Karrayili like to do so because:

1. They are learning to read and write.
2. They are learning to write their name.
   This is a good thing when they have to sign for things. They don't have to use an x.
3. People can recognize their names when mail is addressed to them.
4. They go on bush trips.
   This is good because they bring kids and teach them bush skills and language.
   It is also a time to tell stories, which are written down.
   The students make books, using their own stories.
   The stories are used as reading books in class to help people along with their reading skills.
5. People say that it is good having an adult education centre at Bayulu community.
   Some people who just sat at camp all day, before the school was there, now have something to do.
   Some people who used to spend a lot of time at the pub, or drinking at other places, now have something to do with their time.
   Some people who used to play cards all the time don't play as much now because they can spend time at school or the silk screening workshop.
6. People from Bayulu Community would like to see more education opportunities set up for young school leavers. The only way these young people can, at present, get further education is if they leave their homes and families.
   The places they can study at are far away from their communities and they get homesick and find it difficult to cope with a new place and different people.
   The people at Bayulu school think there needs to be more community based education for these young people and a tertiary type institute set up in the Kimberley region.

Making Books

Purpose of this talk — to tell you how we make reading books and why we make them.

HOW

- We go bush sometimes for a weekend. It is best to go at the weekend because the kids can come. They are at school during the week.

- We either go on a fishing or hunting trip.
- After setting up camp we go fishing or hunting.
- After we have been fishing or hunting we come back to camp, put the goanna or barramundi (sometimes both) in a ground oven, have a cup of tea and a yarn.
- We tell stories about what we did during our day.

  Sometimes people tell stories about the old days.
- Our teacher writes down what we say.
- When we come back to town our teacher writes our story on big pieces of paper.
- We draw pictures to suit the sentences that are written on the pieces of paper.
- We send the pages to Halls Creek. The Kimberley Language Resource Centre people have a laminating machine and they laminate the pages and bind them together so they are made into a book.
- Our teacher makes worksheets to suit the stories so we can get used to the words in the books.
- Then we read the books.

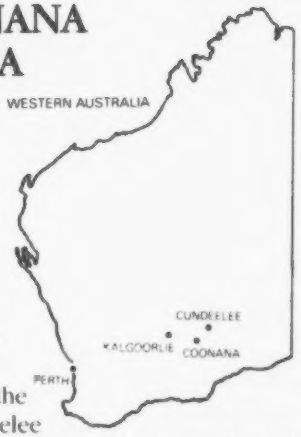
WHY

- We have been making our own books for a while now. People are becoming used to telling stories. Some people who were too shy before, to tell a story, are now good storytellers. We are also learning about the English language. We tell our stories in English and so have practice at speaking it.
- The stories are about things we do and places we go to. The people in the stories are people we know. We enjoy reading these stories more than story books we buy.
- Because the stories are about things we know and do the words in the stories are words we use all the time. It is easier for us to learn these words.
- The worksheets are then easy for us to understand and do because we know the words, people and places written about in the book.
- We feel great when we know we can read a book we have all helped to make.

Chapter 10

"LEARNING OUR WAY: COONANA WOMEN'S GROUP" COONANA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

by Joyce Nudding



Introduction

Hello! My name is Joyce Nudding. I am a Family Resource Worker with the Department for Community Services and I work from the Kalgoorlie Office. I get support for my work from Social Workers Rosalie Dwyer in Head Office, Perth and David Mitchie in the Kalgoorlie Office.

In late 1985, after a few meetings with workers from the Department for Community Services and the Cundeelee Community, the Department for Community Services was asked by Cundeelee Council to set up a Homemaker Programme for the women of Cundeelee, to help them in the move into the new housing Project at Coonana, which was to begin in 1986.

The Homemaker Programme was a special project. In one of the early meetings at Cundeelee, the women were asked: "who could visit from Kalgoorlie each week, to work with you?" I was the person asked to help them.

NEW BEGINNINGS

The Cundeelee people moved over to the new housing in Coonana and are now known as the Coonana Community.

The move was very traumatic as well as very exciting for everyone. As well as a new place and name, "Coonana" had problems. The people "felt" the move as there were many new things to learn and decisions to be made. Coonana folk have come from traditional camp living, to a western lifestyle of living in houses which have a kitchen, bedrooms, bathroom and toilets.

The Europeans put pressure on the Community to move to Coonana early in 1986, as they wanted to start the school year right on time in February 1986. The Government Departments — Health and Education, already had their housing for staff, but most of the community didn't have housing and still slept in the bush camp. The only community people with housing were the Store Manager, the Community Manager and the Assistant Manager. Most houses were not yet completed and this caused some friction and jealousy.

For example:

1. The extended families lived on the verandahs of the completed houses.
2. Some relatives were upset because certain ones couldn't come into homes and talk to certain people.

JOYCE NUDDING, 142 Forrest Place, Boulder W.A. 6432

3. The old people didn't like moving to Coonana as their hearts were elsewhere, in their homeland.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO COONANA FROM 1986 TO 1988?

The Homemaker programme was set up to help and teach the women how to use gas stoves, clean the houses, using the right cleaning materials, the proper use of toilets, safety with electricity and other things.

The success of these teachings didn't come overnight. When I came out at first, every Wednesday, I just got the women together for meetings and we discussed these things. At the beginning, for around six months nothing happened, as the women were very shy and didn't know what to talk about. We often sat for long periods of silences and no one said anything, but, after some coaxing and encouraging them to talk, things started happening, very quickly.

The Women's Group is very intelligent and very enthusiastic. The goals the women have set themselves and achieved in such a short space of time are very remarkable and should be very highly commended. I give them top marks.

HOMEMAKER PROJECTS ACHIEVED SO FAR

1986-1987

1. **Bank Account**

   We opened a bank account for the homemakers.

2. **Second-hand Clothes Store**

   This provides a service to the whole Community. Funds from sales go into the homemaker account. The second-hand clothes come from Perth in wool bales and then are sold at the Homemaker clothes store.

3. **Sewing Classes**

   Sewing Classes were held for women to make curtains for their own homes. Funds for curtain rods and materials were obtained by jumble sales and second-hand clothes sales.

4. **Furniture Project**

   The Furniture Project was a great success and a new experience for the women. Firstly, they needed funds to buy the furniture, so a letter was written by the women to the Minister for DCS. This letter requested funds to purchase furniture for the new homes, as these people had nothing to go into new houses. The letter was written in a petition style with all ladies signing their names to it and a few men around also signed it. In a few weeks a letter came back and funds were received. We made lists of the furniture needed for the new homes and worked out how much to spend on furniture for each home.

   We took three groups of women shopping in Perth, at different times and encouraged them to select and buy their own furniture. What an enjoyable and exciting time they had, another learning experience.

5. **The Women's Centre**

   The Centre consists of four transportable buildings. The women received this Centre through constant pressure and asking the Council.

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Before the women had the centre, we used to sit outside under the shady trees or on the shop verandah. Often we went in someone's home when the weather was bad.

The Centre Building

1. Kitchen and dining area
2. Second-hand Clothes Store
3. Extra Store Room
4. Kitchen and Dining Area for visitors. Added on to this building is a laundry, shower and two toilets.

In the middle of the buildings are lawn and gardens and a sand pit for children to play in.

6. **School Lunches**
The Lunch Centre operates every school day to give school children their lunches, which are cooked at the Centre.

7. **Women's Bus**
The women have their own Bus, to use as they need. They got the bus by talking and writing to the D.A.A. representative in Kalgoorlie.

8. **Playgroup**
A playgroup for pre-pre-school children is held every day at the Centre.

CHANGES AT COONANA

The social changes at Coonana have been tremendous. The people are going through changes daily, despite the fact that they still have problems and have had them all the way through.

Problems such as drinking alcohol, deaths in the family, and disruptions from other areas affect the whole Community, not just the individual. From time to time there seems (to the outsider) that nothing fruitful is happening, but, believe you me, these times, I feel, are the biggest learning times and decisions are being made in one's mind and inner self. I would not feel a failure if people gave it all away and went back to their traditional lifestyle. They too would not be a failure, for they would have tried, weighed up both sides and then made their very own choice.

People, I feel, can only be encouraged, supported, given help (as needed) and befriended, when they are accepted with patience and trust on their own ground. They cannot be pushed. They need to have choices and they will learn in their own time and way. I have learned this myself.

Chapter 11

LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES FOR TRADITION OR FOR TODAY?

by Nick Thieberger

In this paper I want to discuss some of the issues involved in designing language courses for Aboriginal languages. I am a non-Aboriginal linguist working with Aboriginal communities on language programmes and this paper is a result of having to figure out what programme might best suit a particular situation. As this is the first paper in the language section of this conference it will be useful to briefly outline types of programmes that are available, and suggest that there are a range of possible outcomes for language courses apart from fluency in language.

I pose the question, 'for tradition or for today?' because the way that language courses are often approached is from the point of view of keeping traditional languages alive. There is a danger that we will fall into the old stereotype that the RSL recently revived about 'true' Aboriginal people. We have to be careful that we are not saying that you are not a 'true' representative of your cultural heritage unless you can speak your language. This assertion supports the same stereotype as the notion that Aboriginal people who, for example, do not use spears for hunting, or who do not rely on bush tucker are not 'true' Aboriginal people. Of course we don't accept this idea anymore because we understand that Aboriginal lifestyles have gone through changes over the past two hundred years, as have the lifestyles of all people in Australia. In exactly the same way as there have been changes in Aboriginal ways of living, so have there been changes in Aboriginal languages. There is not a simple dichotomy between 'traditional' and 'modern', rather there is a whole range of responses to the cultural differences that exist among Aboriginal people and between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. The linguistic concomitant of this is that Aboriginal languages have undergone great changes, including the development of lingua francas (pidgin or creoles) based both in indigenous languages and English.

We should distinguish, then, between keeping languages alive and keeping traditions alive. It is quite possible to pursue either of these aims without the other. What I am suggesting in this paper is that a language programme will not be as effective if it does not address the changes that a language has gone through, and with that also the role of tradition as defined by the current generation of speakers or descendants of speakers of the language. The way in which we perceive our own tradition is with reference to our present needs. Traditions only exist in the way in which we interpret them today. When people talk of maintaining or preserving their culture or their language, I suggest they may be talking about a recreated form that is suited to present needs. This phenomenon is related to what Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) call 'Invented Tradition'; a set of practices which automatically implied continuity with the past, where possible, with a suitable historic past (see also Morphy and Morphy 1984). Similarly European

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NICK THIEBERGER, Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre,
P.O. Box 2508, South Hedland W.A. 6722

Australians, for example, have an image of their own tradition of hard work in conquering a harsh country, an image that excludes their use of Aboriginal slave labour. What people remember about their past, their tradition, is not fixed, but is tied into their current perceptions and needs. When it comes to deciding on a language programme we have to realise that there is a difference between wanting traditions recorded and having children speaking an ancestral language.

Let me give a practical example. I have been working with people from Punmu, a community in the Great Sandy Desert. Punmu is located in what has recently become the Rudall River National Park. As in many Desert communities, Punmu people come from various linguistic backgrounds, among them Manjiljarra, Kartujarra and Warnman. Punmu community was formed earlier in the 1980s when a group of people broke away from the Strelley mob. Since then the relationship between Strelley and Punmu has been strained.

Throughout this time a mining company, CRA, has been exploring for minerals in the Rundall River area. The area around Rudall is Warnman country. They call the river *Karlamilyi*. In the past few years there has been a conflict between some of the people at Strelley and Punmu over who should speak for the country. CRA has found a very rich uranium deposit and expects to develop a strip mine when the federal government changes its uranium policy. Warnman people at Strelley have cleared the sites where CRA is exploring without talking to Warnman people at Punmu, nor with members of the two Aboriginal communities who live in the National Park.

Both Strelley and Punmu have recently begun 'Warnman programmes', using the language, I suggest, as a way of reidentifying or of reinforcing the identification of Warnman people with their country. Being Warnman has become important, so people who have always been Warnman but, for example, who had been sending their children to a school where they were learning Nyangumarta or Manjiljarra, decided they wanted a Warnman language programme. At both Strelley and Punmu Warnman is not the main language being used everyday. Children are growing up and hearing very little Warnman spoken around them. Consulting speakers about their aims for a language programme makes it clear that what is wanted is a dictionary and books for use in the school. A language programme in this situation will need to be a language awareness or a language reintroduction programme.

There are two points I would like to draw out of this example. One is that tradition is interpreted to meet current needs. It is largely because of the current difference of opinion over land ownership that a language programme has been initiated by Warnman people.

The other point is that there will be different types of language programmes depending on the linguistic situation of a particular group. Some will aim at teaching children to speak a language, others will be used for identity purposes, to provide a link with whatever traditions the community identifies as important to pass on.

All languages are constantly undergoing changes. You just have to read Max Harris in the *Australian* to see his opinion of how Australian English is departing from the 'traditional mother tongue'. So when it come to language programmes I suggest we have to deal with the present state of languages rather than some 'pure' form of the language that existed once.

Aboriginal Societies in Australia

Before looking at the various models of language work possible in Aboriginal communities, it is necessary to understand something about the different Aboriginal communities in Australia. A language programme must conform to the needs of the particular group of people it is designed for. In some communities a bilingual programme might be appropriate, in others there may no longer be any traditional language spoken but a creole may be well established, in yet others some variety of English is the medium of communication. The contact between the invading Europeans and the indigenous population occurred at different times in different parts of the continent, a fact that is reflected in the present linguistic situation.

Willmot (1981) discusses the National Aboriginal Educational Committee (NAEC) socio-geographic description of Aborigines in contemporary Australia as being of four basic types:

(1) Traditional — geographic and social isolation from the rest of Australia (eg Arukun, Papunya, Murray Island, Yirrkala, Western Desert Communities of WA).
(2) Old reserves — considerable geographic and social isolation, but not as traditionally oriented as (1) (eg Pt Pearce, Lake Tyers, Cherbourg, Maribank).
(3) Urban communities (eg Redfern, Inala).
(4) Urban dispersed.

Prior to Willmot's classification, John (1977) identified four degrees of language use in Aboriginal Australia that parallel the four NAEC categories.

1) Speakers who have an indigenous language as their first language (e.g. Yuendumu, Eastern Arnhemland).
2) Speakers who have a creole as their first language (e.g. Ngukurr, Bamyili).
3) Speakers whose first language is a non-standard variety of English which is not a creole (e.g. many urban and rural town dwelling people).
4) Speakers whose English is indistinguishable from that of standard Australian English.

While these four categories do not capture all possibilities, they are useful as a guide to typical situations. We should be aware that the people in John's category (1) may be monolingual in an Aboriginal language, or may be bi- or multi-lingual with their other languages including a variety of English or creole. In category (2) there will certainly be older people who are speakers of Aboriginal languages. Similarly, John's four categories of speaker may all be present in one Aboriginal community so that there is no direct correlation between Willmot's types of communities and John's types of speakers.

It is important to bear both Willmot's and John's four categories in mind as we discuss language programmes. There are still Aboriginal communities (type 1) where English is not used except for dealing with government agencies (eg in the Western Desert and Arnhem Land) and even then its use may be restricted to the few members

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of the community of whom such interaction is required (council members, spokespeople and so on). While we would expect these communities to have the greatest probability of maintaining their languages, it cannot be taken for granted that this is the case. For example, Lee (1983) discusses the differences between old and new Tiwi. The changes are so great that a dictionary written twenty years ago is no longer applicable to current usage. Bavin and Shopen (1985), and Bavin (1988) in a study of children's acquisition of Warlpiri at Yuendumu, show that there are changes occurring in the word order, morphology and lexicon of what is generally considered to be a strong language. From these studies we can conclude that all remaining indigenous languages in Australia are undergoing relatively rapid changes.

In Ngiyampaa in NSW, few of the younger people still speak the old language (Donaldson 1985:137). When they talk it the old people don't correct them, even though the way young people speak is very different from the way old people speak. Some would say that the young people are making mistakes, and that might be true, but these mistakes can also be looked at as the new way of speaking Ngiyampaa. It is no good saying that there is a pure form of the language that has to be stuck to if there is no one around who is speaking that way.

When some story books were written in Ngiyampaa, the old people decided they would write things down in the old way. The young people didn't object, probably because they were respectful of the old people. These books are an important record of what Ngiyampaa was like. They are like the classics in English, Like Shakespeare, in a type of English that no-one speaks anymore, but that we all know as an old way of speaking English. While useful, these classics may not have the same appeal to younger speakers as would an approach which related more closely to their own understanding of Ngiyampaa.

I had the experience of writing introductory lessons for Paakantji in Wilcannia in Western New South Wales. The lessons follow a second language teaching approach, and assume that people want to speak Paakantji. The course material has not been used to my knowledge, and there have been no requests for further lessons to be written. Either the materials fail to address the needs initially expressed by the users, or I misinterpreted the wishes of potential users. In retrospect I think the latter is the case, and that the high regard in which the ancestral language is held is part of a more general nostalgia, a point that I have discussed previously.

Models for Maintenance

Unfortunately there are a number of different terms currently being used for language programmes. McConvell (1986a:9-10) uses three terms to discuss 'Mother tongue programme types' which are specifically for use in schools: (1) Bilingual Education; (2) Language Maintenance — in which the language is still spoken, but not so much by younger people; and (3) Language Renewal, used where the language may be spoken occasionally, but younger people do not know more than a few words. These are similar to the categories used by Catholic Education in WA.

Johnson (1987) describes four programme types but does not elaborate on the different strategies that would be employed in each of them: language continuation, when the language is still in use; language renewal, when older speakers still remember the language; language revival, when there is little still spoken, but there are records available, and; language resurrection, when all speakers have died and only written or taped material survives.

The models I will consider below are a combination of the above.

i) language continuation programmes for languages that are still spoken (including bilingual schooling).
ii) language renewal/reintroduction.
iii) language revival.
iv) language resurrection.

Levels of Maintenance

Tied into each of these programmes is an implicit belief about the level of language maintenance that can be achieved. In areas where the language is not used everyday there is still a need for language maintenance, in the sense of maintaining what still exists of the language. For example, language death studies (Dorian 1981) have shown that languages usually do not just disappear, but that they undergo a series of structural and functional changes ending up in shift to the dominant language. Dorian (1980) shows that choices among alternative sentence structures with similar meanings are collapsed as use of the language declines, or that one structure is favoured by semispeakers of the language. Dressler and Wodak-Leodolter (1982) show the stylistic shrinking of the language that is involved in language shift. McConvell (1986b:8) also notes that loss of style/register distinctions in the old language is a feature of language shift. Bavin (1988) notes the reduction in morphological complexity in Warlpiri. Austin (1986) discusses phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic changes that have occurred in languages of New South Wales; McConvell (1986a) discusses the change in function that languages go through; and Eades (1983) points out the 'Aboriginal' nature of discourse that is, structurally, English. These and other studies show that at every point in the shift from an Aboriginal language speaking community to an English speaking community there is the possibility of intervention to ensure that something is retained of the old language. This is what I understand to be the larger project of language maintenance. While there is also a need for language programmes for cases where the vernacular is a syncretic or post-contact language, I have not had experience with these situations, and so will not deal with them here.

In table 1 I list the features that should be targeted by a language programme, correlated with typical community situations. The table is presented as a guide to the potential for language work. I do not claim that a community will be as easy to categorise as is suggested by the labels in the left hand column. Similarly it is likely that language programmes will draw from a few of the models listed. The reason for defining types is to emphasise that language programmes are possible in many more situations than just those requiring bilingual schools. In addition, language sensitisation or awareness courses (McConvell 1986a, Richards 1982) can be run in all of the situations listed. Such courses are common where there is limited time available in the school curriculum for language work, or where the education department wants to be seen to be recognising Aboriginal languages in schools without committing resources to them (as for example at La Grange).

Language awareness activities can make people aware of their usage, and can make clear the extent to which the traditional language is or is not used. During one such course that I was involved in at Numbulwar, in eastern Arnhem Land, the participants (Aboriginal teaching assistants) were devastated to find just how little the children could understand of their ancestral language, Nunggubuyu. At the same time, the teaching assistants (mostly women) used Kriol in most of their interaction with the children (including their own offspring). The course focussed on language use and provided the impetus for conscious change in language choice among the participants. (There is, however, no evidence that this change actually eventuated; as is pointed out below, intervention is just one of a number of variables in language change).

It should also be noted that there are results achieved by a language programme beyond language learning, such as increased knowledge about heritage (a point raised by Dorian 1987 for programmes in Irish Gaelic), or involvement of adults in the running of the school (as literacy workers or language teachers) (Harris 1987:149).

Another aspect of language maintenance that is included in the models discussed below is language preservation, or 'salvage' work aimed at recording as much as possible of languages (on audio- and video-tape) that have only a few speakers left. Such recording is of enormous value to descendants of speakers, and can provide the input for future language programmes.

Table 1. Aims and types of programmes.

TYPICAL SITUATION	OSTENSIBLE AIM	TYPE OF PROGRAMME
	Continued use of:	
Language in everyday use 'strong' language' Older speakers, shift beginning in younger speakers	— stylistic variation (genres, 'avoidance' ritual) — communicative competence	i) Language continuation. Programmes for languages that are still spoken (including bilingual schooling)
Only 'Rememberers' of the language left	— stories — limited functions, short utterances etc — discourse style	ii) Language renewal reintroduction iii) Language revival
Only recorded sources available	— words	iv) Language resurrection

1. Language continuation, models for languages that are still spoken.

Under this heading come programmes designed to support the diversity of styles and registers used in a language that is spoken everyday. In Australia such variation would include special speech-styles (Dixon 1980:58, Haviland 1979:233). There is little in the literature about models of language maintenance for languages that are still spoken, except for the use of bilingual education programmes. Paradoxically, while maintenance of languages as everyday media of communication appears to be the most commonly discussed form of language maintenance, its implementation is the least understood. Strategies aimed at whole communities of speakers are rarely discussed, especially in comparison with the extensive literature on language programmes in schools. This could be because speakers of languages do not recognise their children's need for language instruction until the children are noticeably speaking a different language to that spoken by their parents.

The uses of a bilingual programme in maintaining a language are not easy to assess. A major difficulty is that the use of a language relies on more than participation in school activities. The influence of a bilingual programme could be to encourage use of the target language outside of school hours, but only, according to Folds (1987), if the community participates and has influence over the direction taken by the course. They may feel that the school is simply not the place for the language to be taught. "Most anangu (local Aboriginal people) do not want the Pitjantjatjara language taught in the present schools at all and point out that their permission was not sought when the bilingual programme was introduced" (Folds 1987:92).

Bilingual education has the potential, then, to assist in maintaining languages, with the proviso that it is controlled by the people it is meant to serve. The school has to employ local Aboriginal teachers who speak the language (as in McConvell's 'two-way' schools, the South Australian 'Nganampa' schools, or the Western Australian community schools).

2. Language Renewal/Reintroduction.

Language reintroduction is appropriate when there is still abundant knowledge of the language in the community in which the programme is to run. Since there are still speakers of the language, they will be involved in teaching and planning language work. The main aim of such a programme is to encourage younger people to use the language, and to enhance the status of the language (the Maori language nests are an example).

Schools can be a base for language renewal. Benton (1986) describes the use of second-language teaching in schools as the major source of language reintroduction for Irish Gaelic and Maori. Most New Zealand schools now offer tuition in Maori language. Irish primary schools have to devote one fifth of each day's teaching to Irish, and on 1978 estimates 10% of the English-speaking population of Ireland had been made 'truly bilingual' through the schools (Benton 1986:63). A language insertion course, where the Aboriginal language is used for part of the time in the classroom, could be part of a school's language renewal programme.

3. Language Revival

Language revival programmes typically rely on recorded sources, and on the knowledge of remaining speakers who have been unable to pass their knowledge on to the present generation. Both sources will provide only partial information about the language; in the absence of a speech community it can be assumed that there will be some attrition in the discourse styles and syntactic structures of remaining 'semispeakers'. Even if historical written records of Aboriginal languages are reliable, which in my experience is rarely the case, there is not always going to be the type of information recorded that is required in revival programmes (see Barlow & Triffett 1987:92). Thus the forms that will be used in this type of programme will have to be

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reconstructed or drawn from similar languages. The question then will be, what language is actually being revived?

If a revival programme is requested, we can assume that there is an interest in the community in learning the language, and that there is a group of people who will undertake the course and will engage in finding out about the language. 'Revival' programmes deal with a language that is still used or still remembered. Typical among the revival programmes discussed in the literature are Gaelic in Ireland (Benton 1986), Hobbema in Alberta, Canada (Kent-Gooderham 1975), Same in Scandinavia (Paulston 1976) and, in Australia, Awabakal (Health 1982), Ngarrindjeri (Kirke 1987), and Wangkamara (ALA Newsletter April/May 1985). The methods used in these courses vary, depending on resources available, but usually language revival relies on recorded sources and on a linguist who can interpret the recorded information.

An example of this type of revival is Cornish, whost last monolingual speaker died in the late eighteenth century (although it may have been spoken for up to a century after that (Shield 1984)). A movement to resurrect the language began in the seventeenth century, but the revival of the 1950's resulted in approximately 1000 people attending classes, of whom only 50 were subsequently capable of holding a conversation in Cornish. Similarly, Mithum and Chafe (1979) describe a Mohawk revival course planned and developed with Mohawk teachers over several years. The language is taught from kindergarten through to sixth grade and only Mohawk is spoken in the classes. It is a programmed approach roughly following the order of a child's acquisition of Mohawk, aiming at communicative compentence in the language. The authors consider a key factor in the success of the programme to be community attitudes and assistance in devising the course. At the same time there were objections to the programme from Mohawk people who had been punished for using the language in their youth and who now considered the language to be 'backward' (Mithun and Chafe 1979:29). This type of programme benefits from having a large population of potential users, and this is one reason that such a course is rarely practical in the Australian context. In the cases where it is possible, the materials devised for Ngarrindjeri in South Australia or Wangkamara are a good example.

4. Language Resurrection

Typically a language resurrection programme is instituted when there are no more speakers of the language. It differs from language revival in that it relies entirely on recorded sources. Examples of this type of programme are rare, but the use of Banjalang in Victorian schools is a form of resurrection. The aim of such courses cannot be expected to be more than an awareness of what some parts of the language were like.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have given a number of examples of language programmes and of types of programmes. There are a number of reasons for running programmes, and often the aim is not fluency in a language, but rather is knowledge of one's heritage or tradition. Language programmes can obviously help to 'keep languages strong', this may be one aim of bilingual schooling for example. However, a language programme is only one small input. If people are not using the language themselves then usually the programme is really aiding in awareness of traditions rather than aiming at teaching children to speak the ancestral language.

When people ask for a language programme it may well be with the aim of passing on traditions to their children, or of identifying themselves with some set of traditions as they are defined today. It is possible to create fancy programmes with lesson plans and elaborate teaching materials, but if these do not address the reasons for the establishment of the programme in the first place, they run the risk of sitting on the shelf, as did the materials I produced in Wilcannia.

As linguists we have to be clear about what is wanted in the language programme. Just because a programme does not aim at fluency in a language does not mean there is no role for a linguist. The challenge is to assess the reasons for initiating language work, and to design programmes and materials so that they address the current needs of Aboriginal people.

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Chapter 12

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEARNING FROM A BLACK AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

by Cheri Yavu Kama

Edited by Pat Dudgeon B.A. (Psychology) and Jennifer Sabbioni (Dip. Teach. WACAE).

WHAT IS LEARNING

For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to consider learning, in a culturally defined, and historically traditional perspective. This paper will not rely on written texts in academically accepted circles, because most of those texts are written from a white Anglo-Australian perspective. The purpose of this paper however, is to discuss 'empowerment through learning' from a black perspective. Literature at present relating to this issue is very scarce. Many literary endeavours have been cited, and it is the essence of the thoughts and ideas of black Americans, Africans and other black academics that I will draw on in an endeavour to address the learning concept that we as black Australians need to consider today. Using black thoughts, and ideas, will enable us to address the learning concept as perceived by this black Australian. It is this perspective that I will use to discuss the processes of learning which are bought to bear when we engage in the act of acquiring the black mindset. It is this mindset which we use to interpret understanding and knowledge about the tools for instruction that our society has need of today. It is this mindset that is needed, to be understood, so that we as a people can continue to function and advance in Australian society.

Generally speaking our people and all people require a social environment to create and sustain the culture of their social groupings. Our parents, and we ourselves could be protected, nurtured, and socialized within the group while learning about our human ways. These ways, we learned, were tools of necessity, the tools of survival, and the tools which provided our emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual stimuli. These tools enabled our forefathers to develop a society in which our peoples' arts, religious practices, and philosophical concepts give to us, their descendants today, a basic and historical continuity. Our way of doing things, and learning things, comes from a culture thousands of years old.

In our culture the social units which encompassed our immediate environment on the day to day contact, and the face to face encounters, empowered us to develop into dependent beings, who were independent in thinking and collective in identity. Our social cohesion depended on the 'us' feelings, the 'we' feelings, the 'together' feelings. Such communal and collective learning clearly empowered each member's defined role expectations, within a system of reciprocal relationships. It also enabled the individual to identify, and justify his essential beings. By contributing to the common and shared experiences, the individual increased the interdependence of the learning experience, and the acquiring of knowledge for the whole group's learning. By acquiring knowledge about the group, its tools of socialization, its methods of education, and its understanding of the defined roles, every individual was empowered.

CHERI YAVU KAMA, WACAE Aboriginal Enclave, P.O. Box 66, Mt Lawley W.A. 6050

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because the learning aspect of the group evolved from the daily life of the people themselves. Learning in our culture, was by observation, and imitation of behavioural patterns exercised by elders, parents, and peers. Our tribal elders served as our teachers, but without portfolio. By performing their tasks, they fulfilled their role, as did every other member, and these were the models used for our future generations to follow. Learning resulted from the natural focus of the collective attention, rather than from teaching by adults, or the learning taking place in an artifical environment. In our culture, our teachers were all people with whom we interacted from birth to death. Our school was the natural and social environment in which we existed. The empowerment came from our learning about our society and our culture, the rules the norms, and behavioural expectations that were practiced and understood by all. It developed within the child of our community the belief that the individual belonged to the 'we' group, the 'us' group, the 'together' group, and this developed further into the communal mindset. This mindset empowered each person to participate in our social system, within the social institutions that gave social cohesion and social control.

This ideology of 'we ness', 'us ness', 'togetherness', created our individual and communal identity and empowered our individual and communal purpose. Borrowing from the words of a black American brother Nathan Hare (1971), who so eloquently expresses this concept of community, or togetherness, and replacing the word 'American' with 'Australian' we could and should remind ourselves that,

> We are black Australians: we are the exotic quintessence of a universal and ancient blackness, an unbreakable link between our past, our victimization, and the inevitable resurgence of an ancient and glorious history, and eternal pastness. We have lost by force our land, parts of our language, and to some degree our traditional life ways. We will one day soon seize what we have lost.

But we can never fully accomplish this until we have learnt to restore the integrity of our people to learn from a black perspective, and teach that learning our way. We need to redefine ourselves, and only we can do that. We need to set in motion the mechanisms whereby our communities can begin to recognize the need to assert our own definitions, of our history and reclaim our own perceptions of our culture subjective though those perceptions may appear to be. We need to put in motion our own sense of community and togetherness. We need to assert our cultural blackness, and identify our blackness, because that is who and what we are, black people, with a black culture and a black history.

Aborigine is not a black image of us. It is the image created by our white brothers and sisters. It is their image of us, it is their invention of us that they use to describe us. We are, and always will be black people. That is our image of who and what we are, and that is the image of our forebears. That image empowered them to survive and create their history and existence for over thousands of years. When the white man came and found us and perceived us to be a 'lazy, miserable, godforsaken, misbegotten species of the human race,' he gave us a new name 'Aborigine'. We did not have any say in its definition or its introduction. 'Aborigine', was the word that empowered them to define us, and classify our existence in their terms. When we learn to define our own image, as black Australians, we will have an image, a reality image of ourselves that we have defined. That image can then be taught to us and our people and to others.

To be empowered we must learn to re assert and identify ourselves as black people, with a black history, and a black culture. We must learn to reject the image of 200 years of white definitions, and white concepts, based on a conqueror conquered philosophy. This image has stripped us, and taught us to be self devaluating, inferior, and shameful of who and what we are. It has created for us, concepts of ourselves that are built upon a fragmented culture, and a victimized image, that shamefully robs us of the power to express freely our own legitimate conceptions of ourselves, our own legitimate conceptions of our communal esteem, community identity, and communal actualization.

Black Australians today must empower themselves from the root of their existence. The very essence of that existence comes from the communal mindset that spiritually unites us, and empowers us as individuals. It is the same essence that legitimizes our individual response to the communal expressions within that existence.

What are some of the features of that empowerment, what are the features of that empowered communal expression? Let me put it to you, that our extended family networks is one expression. Let me put it to you that our common spiritual recognition is another. Every time we pass a brother or a sister in social interaction and there is connection of eyes, there is also a connection of spirit and something deep inside acknowledges that we are both children of the same earth. This is empowerment in action, and we need to reintegrate our self concept individually and communally with that expression. We need to motivate our learning toward achieving our empowerment in this way at every level of society. It is only as we learn to liberate ourselves from the Anglo-Saxon images and concepts of individualism and selfness, that we can train our minds to look into the beauty of the black owned communal mindset and become re awakened to the concepts of our cultural 'we' feelings, our 'us' feelings, our 'together' feeling, our empowered communal selves.

Empowerment then will be our freedom to express, and be black Australians fully, human beings with all the aspects of our own developmental, educational, social, political, and cultural experiences supporting that empowerment. When we as black people can fully embrace our own sense of identity and self acceptance, without shame, a shame emanating from our perceptions of who and what we are from Anglo Australian concepts, we will begin the process of empowerment. When we as black people can fully express our own sense of identity and self acceptance from our own perceptions of who and what we are based upon our own criteria, the process of empowerment will free us to change the historical concepts that have taught, shaped, and controlled black lives for the last 200 years. We will be empowered to learn, free from the controlling and oppressive dependency that has historically proved our existence. We will be empowered to educate ourselves and white Australia from our perspectives. We will be empowered to participate in the decision making processes that will continue to influence the lives of every black Australian alive today and born tomorrow.

DISEMPOWERMENT

We are products of our history, the ancient history and the interculturated history of the last 200 years. As we have lived and grown and acted, each of us has influenced our collective and contemporary history. The dynamic ethnocentric history of the Anglo-Australian, has interacted with our own ancient and fragmented one, and created the history that we as black Australians now identify with. We were disempowered by the colonists, made by government decree aliens in our own country. We were not given opportunity to be trained in the ways, or institutions of the new rising culture. Our knowledge of the new culture was based upon victim versus victor. The invading culture has within its history the processes and mechanisms of a collective co-operativeness, a communal identity. Our power and strength source was spiritual not material, communal not individual, altruistic not egocentric, and to the victor, determined to subdue all that we were, all our history, all our conceptions, became our shame and victorious white man's burden and power source.

We had limited power to alter our circumstances, and no power to influence our experiences, or the direction that we desired. For example, the experiences of an infant are largely determined by the adults with power. The adults are also in a better position to determine the nature of their own experiences. The knowledge of western civilization transported to our land 200 years ago, conceptualized in the minds of settlers tarred by the industrial revolution and entrapped in the minds of white slaves, or convicts, was a knowledge that was technologically at war with the knowledge of our culture, our ancestors, and our civilization.

Howard (1982) claims, that we lack both the ideological and economic basis of power in contemporary Australian society; for the most part, he says, that we control neither things nor ideas. We are disempowered by the very system of social control exported to this land, and set up supposedly to free us. Social institutions, that weld social control in Australia today, will not, and do not have a mechanism that can disentangle the victim from the social web woven by societal forces today. It is part of the social control exercised by the powerful over the powerless.

It perpetrates the inequalities that exist, and have existed for the past 200 years. Our instituted system, the Education system, is the indoctrination agent that has been set up by an executive committee of the dominant and empowered exclusive white academic community. It continues to uphold the invested interests of Anglo Australia. These interests cause those within the education system to watch over, inspect, spy, direct, legislate over and for, regulate, docket, indoctrinate, preach at, control, censure, and study us from their own ethnocentric perspective. While we as a people continue to allow white Australia to study us in their microscopes for the sake of doctorates, degrees, prestige, and status, we will always remain disempowered. In any experiment or study, the object in question cannot get up and question those who have initiated the studies. Can a piece of pottery question the potter as to its shape or design, where it came from, and just what it would be suited for in its final form.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEARNING OUR WAY

The last 20 years has seen governments and educators implementing costly reforms, and expensive programmes that aim at reversing the dynamic struggle between a minority and a dominant society. The cause of this struggle can be defined in terms of the attempts by black Australia to empower their people, and gain a sense of control and instigate their own forms of education and learning. It can be defined in terms of black Australia attempting to define their own culture and history and rewriting the Anglicised version. It can be defined in terms of black Australia, desiring to implement their own strategies and policies about learning, so that finally it can be seen by all concerned, to be a black Australian interpretation of a world view, and that view has been unequivocally legitimized by all Australians.

As long as we as a people are content with a policy of education that profiles our identity, through a paternalistic handout syndrome, which endeavours to place Aboriginal teachers and teachers aides within the white educational system, empowerment through learning will not eventuate. Why!? Because our teachers are still perpetrating the white middle class ideology, and protestant work ethic, and white Australia's world view. Our children are still being taught in a system which aims to continue our disempowerment. Our people will continue to be the backs upon which white academics, and even our own academics, will ride into the sunset of academic recognition and national and international status, and we the Black concerned will still be endeavouring to establish an agenda relevant to our learning our way. We will still be endeavouring to empower ourselves so that we can impact on the destinies of our future generations who today are amongst the highest to drop out of education and also drop out of society altogether. We will still be giving legitimacy to conferences, seminars, educational forums, such as this, and feel that we have achieved something. Yet we will not have resolved the basic rights of every one of us, the right to an education that confirms, and affirms our blackness, our learning, our communal mindset, and our perceptions of who and what we are. We will still be far removed from our historical and cultural learning.

It was this learning that empowered our ancient parents to be the beautiful, creative, majestic, intelligent and vibrant black nation we in this day and age, have only come to know and hear about through those who stand today as our conquerors.

IS IT LEARNING MY WAY OR LEARNING OUR WAY WHICH WILL EMPOWER US

What about 'Learning my way'? Is this our way of learning? Or is the 'my' representative of the system as it stands today? If we take 'MY' to truly represent 'OUR' way, it will be one of the tools that will empower us to be on equal base with our Australian educators. 'Our' way will not be considered inferior. It will empower us to introduce our Australian educators to the system of communal learning that has, is, and always will be the system of empowering our people. Learning must come from our perceptions of this concept. Otherwise, we are still reaching out to a dream, and will be forever held in a system that progressively increases our dependency on a system that teaches us to be thankful for the tokenistic, protectionistic, handout positions metered out to us by a benevolent education system that maintains the status quo. We will be still outside of circles of direction and control, and never be empowered to achieve constructive change, or valued change for our children, our people and ourselves.

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The time has come for black intellectuals, black organizations, black communities, and black people who represent those communities, to consider the philosophical, psychological, sociological and educational implications of a system that glorifies the individualism of 'Learning My Way'. Do we as a people think in terms of the I, My, Me? or do we think in the terms of We, Our, and Us. If we answer from the heart of our cultural identity, and history, I believe that you will have to agree with me, and accept that 'Empowerment' through learning has always been a communal project, flowing from a communal framework, created by a communal mindset, conceptualized by a communal thought process.

Any learning must be planned through the process of negotiation. We must be part of that process, and the decision making process that plans the strategies, the programmes, and the implementing and evaluating of the mechanisms that are set in place to administer them. Any learning that will be of significance and value must come from us. We must be the central cog of the enterprise. If we are to be empowered through learning then we must be closer to the central position of the negotiations. We must be the agents of the change, and this will only occur when educators of white Australia realize that the protective guidances of the past need to be re-assessed, and a new form of learning, that is based on an acknowledgement of the black community's value of itself is addressed. The learning mechanisms and educational institutions, need to acknowledge the black 'experts' who have been sanctioned by white Australia and black Australia too. Black and white educators working together, empowering each other will and can negotiate this learning and set the processess in motion. We need to become the agents for our empowerment. This will only occur when we expose the subtle and unseen communications of paternalism, tokenism, racism, and politicised gambits of ethnocentric Australia, that continue to haunt us at all levels of social interaction. If we believe that these 'isms' do not exist anymore, we are only fooling ourselves, and enslaved in a white utopian mirage. They are still woven into the fabric of society, and we only fool ourselves if we deny it. They raise their heads whenever we are called to take part in a discussion, whenever we are asked to sit on a committee whenever we are called to impact into policy for change. Invariably the decisions, the real decisions, which will affect that change will be addressed by our white Australian educators, with no or little input from our people. The decisions will invariably be addressed by the self made experts, the self made individuals who believe they are the experts, because they have studied us for hundreds of years, and almost reduced us to a component of intellectual debate. Because of them we should be grateful, appreciative, and thankful, that is all. They have contributed to our internal knowledge of the 'we' and 'our' concepts of our learning. As a people we must acknowledge them as the elders of white Australia, their people's experts for interpreting our ways for them to understand us from their own white ethnocentric perspective.

But for taking our people with us into the 21st century, it must be our experts who are empowered to direct our learning. It must be our people who design policy for our change. And it must be that the experts who hold the power and control, must recognize that we as a people have experts equal in every way to their own.

If one thing worth value can come from a conference such as this, let it be this. Let it be acknowledged that 'Learning My Way', the individualistic, form of learning will not bring about any significant change — because it does not recognize black Australian thinking, black Australian frames of reference, and black Australian expertise.

'Learning Our Way', empowers us, and gives us the opportunity to take control, and gives our people the chance to work within what has been already accomplished. It also recognizes that intrinsic communal mind. It empowers us to rewrite our history, write policy, and plan strategies for our future generations. It empowers us to plan for an education system that will truly be ours, planned and executed by us with the white Australian community standing by applauding us on as we together hear the words that designate us as a people free and empowered at last. We will proudly say, "We black Australians have done this, we have achieved this, because you gave us the freedom to empower ourselves, and because of that we have once again reunited our past with our present, and now we will walk with you into a future that is truly Australian in every way."

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SECTION TWO

"OUR COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND OUR COMMUNITY SOUL"

Beresford Domic.

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Chapter 13

ABORIGINAL ADULT EDUCATION

By Margaret Valadian

Adult education for Aborigines may be defined as that which relates to the needs of those members of the community who range in age from 15 to 50 and beyond.

Within this age range there is considerable variation of need and even greater variation of education provision.

The nature of the education currently provided varies according to age, social, cultural and economic status and geographic location.

It may be argued today, that adult education provision for our community tends to advantage the haves and to disadvantage the have-nots.

Education institutions and government agencies tend to favour those who have attained some levels of schooling and to forget those who are less fortunate.

Consequently adult education may be deemed to have failed to meet the needs of our community to be informed.

It may be argued that adult education is one of the least planned, least provided and least professionalized of education services in our community today.

Adult education provision for Aborigines still tends to focus on vocational training and hobby recreation courses.

There has been some improvement from 10 years ago, when the Aboriginal consultative group to the schools commission carried out a national study of aboriginal access to technical and further education.

This study showed that the majority of TAFE services for Aborigines was for recreation courses.

At least today, there is increasing provision for vocational training programs.

However, there is still a lack of understanding of the education needs of our 'adult community' — I emphasize the word — education as distinct from technical training. I refer to education that will broaden our horizons, and increase our understanding of all aspects of life.

PROVISION OF YOUTH

Training for Aboriginal youth in the 15-18 age group is generally provided through TAFE institutions and outreach services.

This level of training is primarily focused on vocational training in the construction trades, service industries or clerical skills.

It is of course recognized that an increasing number of Aboriginal youth are continuing their studies to complete high school.

MARGARET VALADIAN, Aboriginal Cultural and Training Institute, Balmain, N.S.W.

However a large number of Aboriginal youth remain outside current education service provisions — a situation which should concern all of us who work in the community.

ADULT TRAINING

For the 18-40 year olds, there is a better range of tertiary education provision.

Within the urban areas, adults in this age group have access to a variety of programs and courses from bridging courses for mature age students, certificate programs, undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as technical and college training in the helping professions and high flying areas such as medicine and law.

Adults in the rural and remote areas are not so well served. Their options and opportunities are severely limited.

For every positive development, there is a counter ruling negative development.

The underside of tertiary training is the movement toward greater individualization and a weakening of our community orientation and loyalties.

How many Aborigines with tertiary training are working with our community, in particular the rural and remote areas.

Most, if not all, have moved to secure well paid positions in the federal/state bureaucracies. These positions make little demand on their time, energy or community loyalties.

I am not suggesting that they should not work in the bureaucracy. On the contrary I would be the first to accept that we do need informed, community oriented members of our society to work within the system.

However, it is reasonable to expect that members of our community who have been "educated" on Aboriginal dollars would be willing to dedicate a few years of their professional life, using their knowledge and skills to enhance the development of our community by working in our community.

As yet, this has not happened.

Because of this, development which could be achieved in one lifetime, has now been deferred for many generations perhaps never to be achieved at all.

THE ELDERLY

It is a sad reflection on our current situation that adult education is denied to our elder generation.

It would appear that the policy makers, Aboriginal education institutions and indeed our various education committees have taken the point of view that the elder generation — the over 50's are not deserving of education provision. How many programs are specifically provided for the over 50s in our communities.

This is of course a direct contradiction of education practice in our traditional society — where the elders not only continued their own education, but controlled and contributed to the education formation, growth and development of younger generations.

It is an indictment on our aboriginal education advisory committees that they have shown so little regard for the education needs of the elder members of our community.

This of course reveals clearly and dramatically, the degree to which we have surrendered the fundamental values of our traditional heritage.

This lack of recognition and regard for our elders will be reciprocated — for if we fail to share our knowledge and skills with them, they of course will fail to share their knowledge and skills with us.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STATUS

Another barrier to adult education for Aborigines is related to their social and cultural status.

Those who have attained little social standing are not as well served as those who have achieved higher levels of social standing and mobility.

Those who have remained more traditionally oriented receive less consideration than those who have become more assimilated.

This gap continues to widen as each new government policy and program is imposed on the community.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Access to education is also determined by economic status.

Those members of our community who have least opportunity for employment are also the ones who have least opportunity for or access to adult education.

Their education deprivation is also a result of their geographic isolation and perceived lack of social standing.

But the future survival of our community depends on these folk as much as the others. For if one section of our community is deprived in any area, then the whole community is deprived.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The provision of post secondary training for Aborigines is determined to a very large extent by their geographic location.

Those in close proximity to the more densely populated areas have greater opportunity if not greater access to adult education services; than those in rural and remote areas. Within the urban areas of course, those who are out of contact with the organization also out of reach of education services particularly adult education. This disparity is exacerbated by the fact that rural and remote communities are also distanced from mainstream media which can be a source of adult learning.

Whilst some efforts are being made to remedy this, the services provided, have not been able to provide the comprehensive education they need to put them in touch with the world.

One of the difficulties we face in this area, is that adult education is not very well defined or understood.

We all have a clear understanding of primary schooling.

We have a clear understanding of secondary schooling.

We all have a clear understanding of technical training.

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We all have a clear understanding of professional training.

We do not have a clear understanding of adult education.

Adult education can take many forms:

1. It can be taught or it can be learned.
2. It can be passive or it can be active.
3. It can be formal or it can be non formal.
4. It can be certified or it can be non certified.
5. It can be structured or non structured.
6. It can be participatory or non participatory.
7. It can be custom designed or pre packaged.
8. It can be mind broadening or mind boggling.
9. It can facilitate development or facilitate disintegration.
10. It can create an informed community or it can contain the community in ignorance.

One problem we face is that adult education is not clearly defined. More importantly, there are no clearly defined goals for adult education.

For 200 years, education for Aborigines has been focused on the children and focused on young adults.

As such it has failed to give us the educational foundations we need not only for our survival but also for our growth as people.

As we move towards the end of this bicentennial year and begin to think about the future, it may be worthwhile to take a critical look at the education system which is currently operating, to see if it can be made more responsive to our needs.

Traditionally, education had two major focal points — the youth and the elders.

Youth in traditional society provided a focus for the coming together of the clan members to design and deliver the formal education system that prepared the individual for life in the community.

This education system was clearly designed to develop informed, capable and contributing members of our society.

The elders in our traditional society were responsible, indeed they were obligated to provide the education required by the youth.

Yet, if we look across the board at our community today, it is our youth — our school leavers and our elders who are forgotten and excluded from the education service.

The educational bond that developed between youth and elders in the past is sadly missing in our society today.

In many of our communties we hear the sad comment that our young people are no longer respectful or respecting of our elders.

But the future of our society requires a bonding between all generations — youth, adults and elders.

Perhaps it is time for us to become more actively involved in the structuring and focus of our education.

It is time for us to think about the type of education we require not just to develop the individual but also to rebuild a strong, viable and cohesive community.

What does it profit us if we educate the individual but suffer the loss of our community identity and our community soul?

We can have educated individuals but this need not be at the expense of our community cohesiveness.

It is not generally recognized that adult education is the one area of education that need not be dependent on government.

We have it within ourselves to design, develop and deliver education programs that will enable our people to become informed human beings.

We have it within our own resources to organize discussion and activity groups to improve and expand our awareness and understanding of issues that relate not only to our own community but to issues of concern to the mainstream community and the way in which these issues will relate to us. How many of us made the time and the effort to organize real discussions on the new commission or the immigration debate? The answer lies in adult education.

We need adult education that enables our elders to share the knowledge and wisdom of their years.

We need adult education that enables our elders to contribute not just cosmetically but substantively to the education of our children and youth.

We need adult education which gives to our adults the full awareness of their role as parents and providers and the skills they need to properly fulfil this role in these difficult times.

We need adult education programs that gives a clear message to our young people that they can achieve most education programs which say very clearly to our children and our youth that they are important to our survival, they are needed and that we want and support them to carry our national identity, culture and heritage into the next 200 years.

Chapter 14

AN ASPECT OF NYOONGAH* WORLD VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

by Irrluma (A. Isaac Brown)

* The term *Nyoongah* is used in a generic sense to refer to all descendants of the original owners of this land and to dismiss the perpetuation of the colonial register which stereotyped Nyoongah. Terms such as Ngungah, Koorl, or Murri or names of countries still in language are interchangeable. *Nyoongah* is chosen because this paper is given in Nyoongah country. It is used in vernacular form without the articles *the* or *a* and not pluralized as in English forms with the addition of *s* or *es*.

The first recorded evidence of an 'educated' Nyoongah was of Bessy Cameron nee Flower born in the 1850's at King George Sound in south west of Western Australia, who was described in September 1867 as a

> ". . . well educated Aboriginal lady" who was ". . . clear proof that Aboriginals can be educated and made useful . . . that blacks can be instructed above the level of general rudiments of education can be seen by the young black girl, who came . . . from Western Australia to assist as a teacher in my school." (Attwood B. 1986 p 22)

Bessy's chronicler writes

> ". . . she came to question the ways in which the society in which she lived was structured, and to realise these were oppressive." (Attwood B. 1986 p 46)

What I intend to address in this paper is nothing new; our sister first prompted the question and drew attention to the problem 120 years ago. For most Nyoongah it will be nothing new but it is important for us to describe and explain how we view Wetjala systems. Since Bessy's time and until 1954 when Pearl Duncan qualified as a trained teacher, Wetjala education systems did not produce a professionally qualified Nyoongah. In 1965 there were only two known Nyoongah university graduates. Currently, there are over 3000 Nyoongah studying in universities and colleges of advanced education and this has been the result of Nyoongah influence on the political and educational scene.

As Nyoongah, we are well aware of the destruction of our society, the loss of which has its roots in the past policies and practices of governments and the exploiters of our land. In effect the result has been the denial of our traditional systems of the maintenance of our society, forcing our people into a limbo, half between, schizophrenic, marginal existence along side Wetjala. Deprived of our lands we were forced to rely on handouts. The traditional sources and hierarchies which maintained our society were undermined and in most cases removed, the sources of our spiritual life cut off and the whole social, educational and religious structure shattered.

We survived this, but became what was termed for many years, *The Aboriginal Problem*. To Nyoongah it was only Wetjala means of rationalizing a problem Wetjala created in the deracination of our people. We survived what we saw as a *White Problem*.

ISAAC BROWN, MOSA, Monash University, Victoria 3168

Our problem, our Nyoongah problem became the reaffirmation, re-establishment and reconstruction of our identity, the restoration of our dignity as a sovereign race, and the acknowledgement that within all tenets of human rights, we are entitled to those freedoms which allow us to develop our full human potential.

The development and the aim of Nyoongah education is the reconstruction of our identity, the conceptualization of that consciousness that will allow our people to evolve culturally from a baseline which is decidedly Nyoongah.

The Failure of Wetjala Education for Nyoongah

Wetjala society imposed an education system which has been one of the most destructive forces at work in Nyoongah life. H.C. Coombs (1978) described it thus;

> ". . . as an instrument of assimilation, education practice was a failure. It tended to alienate the Aboriginal child from his or her family and community, to cause him to question and frequently reject its values and its traditions, to destroy his Aboriginal identity and to leave him restless and alienated from his own society without giving the opportunity or the competence to join white society."

The previous education policies did not give Nyoongah people skills to interact on equal socio-economic terms with mainstream Australia and did nothing to maintain Nyoongah cultural identity.

Lippman (1976) saw two kinds of causes for the gross education failure.

(1) Extrinsic factors, such as poverty, disease, malnutrition, bad housing — all of which adversely affect learning performance and

(2) Intrinsic factors such as teacher expectations, cultural differences, and the learners' self concept.

These last features are subtle in their working and where as we have always given credence to their existence, the education system has not provided real opportunities to examine these features solely from a Nyoongah world view. It is simply not enough to provide more schooling or increase the number of grants if the system itself continues not to really cater for Nyoongah needs. Any comprehensive account of Nyoongah education problems must take into account the considerable differences which lie at the root of so many problems. This is why we feel that aiming for more control over the education our people receive is so important in providing information for planning and change in education from our experiential background.

For many learners, schooling is a training of central relevance to their subsequent lives, and the type of socialization continuous with what they have already experienced. As such, Wetjala education does not appear to be relevant to many Nyoongah, mainly because our current social status is still depressed and alienated by Wetjala systems. Our people view this education process more as a system of *forced social change* than one of cultural *development*. The individualistic, competitive ethos of Wetjala education processes can be alien and alienating to many Nyoongah, divorcing them from their cultural background and distancing them from their communities. Nyoongah people want an education system which meets their needs without destroying their own cultural outlook.

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Nyoongah Input Into The Higher Education System

There is still undoubtedly a long way to go, but in the short time since 1967, Nyoongah success in higher education has been exceptional. There are many reasons for our continued growth in this area but there are two salient features present which did not exist during the colonial experience and the days of the assimilation policies. These are:

(1) The politicising of Nyoongah communities by Nyoongah people in the formation of co-operatives with local educational consultative groups, regional education groups, state education consultative groups and a national education group.

(2) The presence in higher education institutions of Nyoongah enclaves. It is apparent, that institutions which have enclaves which are run by Nyoongah people, or have a majority of Nyoongah staff, and have strong Nyoongah community support tend to have the best success in enrolment, retention and academic performance. The strong presence of Nyoongah influence in the education process enhances success and highlights that Nyoongah identity is something to be encouraged and of which Nyoongah should be proud.

Coping With Cultural Differences In Higher Education For Mature Age Nyoongah

The MOSA programme encourages Nyoongah candidates to express what is personally needed from the programme to be able to cope. The cultural differences which will be discussed are those which have emerged in the interaction between the teachers in the programme and those Nyoongah undertaking it. The candidates have come from remote traditional, rural, urban, and inner urban areas and also include candidates from the Torres Strait Islands, with little or no formal education.

In this relation the main objective of the programme is to provide for the candidate an understanding of the importance of his cultural background and the features of his background which may clash with the system or cause difficulties in the learning process. There is no attempt to directly change aspects of Wetjala systems, but rather to lead the way in which Nyoongah can succeed while maintaining cultural identity.

It is not proposed to cover the obvious structural characteristics of cultural differences, but to examine some of the intrinsic features related to teacher expectation and student self concept which have required some form of direct intervention to assist Nyoongah candidates to succeed.

Nyoongah View of Knowledge Can Be Different

There have been very few studies examining the meaning of words across languages such as Standard Australian English. Nyoongah has identical if not parallel meanings for those characteristics which are important in the idea of ***knowledge*** as well as how ***knowledge*** should be collected, stored, retrieved, and passed on. Characteristics of knowledge such as 'education, instruction, intelligence, learning and wisdom' are present in either culture, as are ***knowledge*** characteristics of 'ability comprehension, discernment and judgement'. But ***knowledge*** also expresses features of 'enlightenment, acquaintance, cognizance, intimacy and familiarity'. (McLeod, W.T. 1986 p 381).

Across these constructs, ***knowledge*** is most likely to have different shades of meaning for both Nyoongah and Wetjala cultures.

Anna Wierzbicka expressed . . .

> ". . . the ideas and values characteristic of a culture find their clearest expression in the language associated with it and in particular in certain areas of the lexicon — especially those areas which would seem to reflect universals of human experience".

Knowledge in Western concepts may have comparable characteristics as in Nyoongah society, traditional or urban. However, vast differences occur in the expression of human experience. Even though the word spoken is in English, the conceptual arrangement may be Nyoongah and so have a different meaning to express Nyoongah experience and may not be the same as the meaning of the word when used by Wetjala. This is demonstrated by Wetjala meaning of the word *knowledge* which includes

> "concepts of understanding, range of information, and familiarity gained by experience". (Hornby. A.S. 1986 p469).

Knowledge expresses familiarity gained by experience, and implies the differential between the meaning which one group has for a concept from that of another cultural group. Wierzbicka demonstrated a possible methodology to examine words such as *fate* and *destiny* to suggest that the inherent differences in meaning for these words in language such as Russian, Polish, German, Italian, French and English are related to issues within the various cultural background.

Traditionally, Nyoongah regarded the acquisition and maintenance of knowledge in exceptionally elitist, exclusive forms. Not only certain people received knowledge but were also bound to only pass it on to selected people. This knowledge was irrefutable, and given as exact intentionally unchangeable ideas. In institutions of higher education, knowledge is available to anyone willing to pursue it; it is possible to challenge, and to discuss with anyone. Furthermore, knowledge is closely shaped by literary considerations. It is this feature which shapes scholarship and differentiates Wetjala institutions approach to knowledge from traditional Nyoongah education.

Nyoongah candidates are affected in two major ways:

(1) most candidates enter without any internalized notion of scholarship. The process of book learning is foreign or unattainable in initial stages, and requires gradual approximation of concrete problem solving tasks to lead the candidate to a realization of intense, organized application of study.

(2) the issues related to book learning are issues related to collecting information from many reading sources. There is not the developed understanding of the significance of close attention to specific details in written material, which is compounded by the difficulty to grasp concepts and constructs presented in syntactically complex and cognitively demanding English — cognitively demanding in that some constructs require presumed knowledge outside of the experience of the candidates.

The candidate's community's view of knowledge will also affect the way in which success is perceived. Whereas most Nyoongah enter the programme with strong commitment and motivation to achieve, they still express an unsureness of being at a university, which they know has never been part of their traditional culture or current experience. It creates a certain tentativeness, and can be further complicated by the candidate's community attitudes which views such an education process as removing the candidate from his culture.

Teacher Expectations: Wetjala World View Clashes With Nyoongah

There are culturally based features which affect the teacher's expectations of the candidate and which are not necessarily resolved through a process of 'studies skills'. The following examples which have required close attention in the MOSA programme are given to illustrate differences in conceptual arrangements.

In traditional Nyoongah society knowledge is generally imparted only by those old enough to have acquired knowledge. This idea implies that the teachers are experienced or 'old' people. This was exemplified in a person who found it difficult to accept instruction from a tutor, much younger than himself, but who was a PhD candidate. The issue was resolved by providing a tutor far less qualified but was an experienced teacher and to whom the candidate related to as an older, ergo wiser, person. The problem was perceived initially as relating to educational deficit but with the intervention of Nyoongah influence to provide the older tutor, the candidate is now succeeding. The skill of the experienced teacher is important but such skill in a younger tutor was obviously disregarded.

In our traditional ways, many phenomena were inexplicable except in 'magic' terms and many phenomena were related to religious experience. In the alien learning situation within an impersonal institution, some Nyoongah learners found Wetjala explanations of events of illness and misfortune unacceptable, and required the help of Nyoongah influence to either smoke the house in which the misfortune occurred or to find ways to remove the 'purri'. One of the awkward side effects of this view of knowledge is that the candidates in some respect find it difficult to cope with analysis and synthesis of some types of information.

Language is critical; so often the expectation is that in Nyoongah use of English there is the same level of meaning present as in Standard Australian English. Brown (1985) listed a variety of grammatical structures apparent in the speech of Nyoongah English which reflected the influence of Nyoongah vernacular languages. The case study examined the influence of Nyoongah vernacular on the spoken creole of one Nyoongah candidate, which in turn influenced the candidates construction of Standard Australian English utterances. It is strongly contended that what has been all too often termed 'poor English', 'incorrect English', 'errors in English', has been the influence of the grammar of original Nyoongah languages. The presence of Nyoongah English has been too often dismissed by teachers to the detriment of the learner whose world view is expressed by the language forms used.

Nyoongah concepts of temporal dimensions are related to an experience where there has been little need to adhere to issues of punctuality, not only of attending classes, producing assignments, but also of recognising the need of a timetable for study. The notion of time clashes so distinctly between Nyoongah and Wetjala systems.

This could relate to traditional learning contexts in which the process of instruction did not have a defined time reference and happened in the context of life experience.

The incarceration of our people in concentration camps for over a hundred years, where the life experience revolved around waiting for Wetjala handouts and in which a dependency was created at the whim of Wetjala people, may have contributed to a lack of time reference. It is certainly reflected in the Nyoongah abhorrence of timetables and schedules, conveying a different notion to punctuality. There is no real need to worry about completing tasks to deadlines because there is always another time. Tied up with this is Nyoongah notion of the transitory nature of things, very little emphasis is given to the keeping of material concrete things which may not have direct relevant to lifestyle, particularly in relation to preserving things which may be needed in the future. The developing of attitudes to insure against the future such as the care of books, the storing of lecture notes, and the collection of readings, are not as significant as with people whose whole culture is built around the permanence of possessions.

Swotting for exams involves for some candidates an entirely new experience in developing memory. It is not enough to assume that the candidates will have memory techniques needed to prepare for examinations. For many candidates, their previous experience in learning tasks would not have had the same demand cognitively to retain large and complex bulk of information to reproduce within a short space of time. The process for training the candidate in these areas cannot assume that Nyoongah will have the same skills and techniques which is expected of Wetjala candidates, who would have developed the facility not only through their later secondary schooling but also within the complexities of their life style.

Self Concept of the Candidate

Many of the candidates come from Wetjala education systems which forced them to go to school and then denigrated their cultural background. Of the 58 candidates entering MOSA only two have commented in enrolment questionnaires on their early education experience in primary and secondary school in positive terms and having real beneficial effects. Forty five spoke of the experience in very negative forms. The remainder were non commital.

The victim status of Nyoongah people has already been commented on from an historical perspective. But for many of us it is not something abstract, it is still real and present. Many Nyoongah today can tell of being forcibly separated from families and put into institutions. And we still have many elders who can, with anguish, tell of the concentration camps. Couple this with the experiences of candidates in an education system which continues to predominantly produce negative side effects requires Nyoongah candidates to overcome other difficulties at greater cost than Wetjala students. For many Nyoongah the feeling of being the victim of denial of natural heritage, of basic human rights in a system of presumed equity, prompts confrontationist attitudes to the hierarchical, authoritarian and individualistic Wetjala system.

MOSA therefore deliberately avoids the setting up of a physical context which is in any way comparable to the secondary schools system and attempts to evolve learning situtations on a peer group basis, with the total organization of the programme approximating as many features of an extended Nyoongah family context. Learning is encouraged on a learner teacher basis, where the learner may be the staff employed to teach and the teacher sometimes is the candidate.

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Individual mastery techniques together with peer group learning techniques are used initially to lead candidates to aspects of diadactic teaching. All people employed to facilitate this learning process are available to the learners on an 'open door' policy. Learning is encouraged on a one to one or small group basis within any mutual reasonable time, which can be in the evenings or the weekends. Classes and timetables are present but learners are guided in terms of the values and utility of these classes rather than rigid adherence to scheduling.

MOSA candidates have identified four major features which relate to this victim status effecting learning for them.

(1) MOSA emphasizes Nyoongah perspective in all subjects taught in the orientation programme, particularly history, where many candidates learn for the first time of the true extent and intensity of the destruction of our culture. The resultant anger and frustration inhibits objective and non-emotional debate and produces aggressive attitudes. Candidates learn to recognize this behaviour and to overcome it with their teachers and peers.

(2) Traditionally Nyoongah people express shame not only in respect to oneself but also the shame that could be generated in others because of ones own actions. Whether this has evolved from traditional patterns of public humiliation as the first stage of a corrective process or from the denigration of our culture through such demoralizing stereotypes can be debated. But throughout all of Australia the phrase "it's a shame job" or "don't" — too much shame", is common to hear amongst Nyoongah. Learning situations which other students may tolerate and not be overcome, are avoided by Nyoongah candidates because they are "shame job".

Possibly, inherent within this notion is the extremely low self esteem many Nyoongah people have in any achieving situation. The notion that Nyoongah can achieve in Wetjala systems is so remote and distant from them, that there are real expressions of futility and hopelessness in even trying to aspire to succeed. A candidate requested a photo of the director of the programme to take back to the community to show that it was indeed one black Nyoongah who ran the programme. It may have been a matter of pride but it also implied the need to establish the belief that Nyoongah can hold positions of achievement.

(3) The effects of the victim status has generated an esprit de corps amongst many Nyoongah out of which has grown a very definite social code, which conflicts with mores of conduct amongst many Wetjala. Within Nyoongah society there are many non acceptable behaviours which are polite within Wetjala circles and vice versa. To mention the name of our deceased is one of these behaviours. Many candidates are described as 'too familiar' as their spontaneous approach lacks Wetjala formal conventions. Nyoongah people will share and this also involves the sharing of assignments and the production of essays — a situation which the individualistic Wetjala system finds hard to tolerate. It has been MOSA's observation that Nyoongah candidates will spend hours, days, weeks talking about an assignment in pairs, in groups with other learners, with teachers, long before writing. This approach inherently produces a consensus of material. Yet our undergraduates have been accused of cheating in producing similar essays.

(4) For some candidates it is apparent that it is not the fear of failure which effects learning but a real fear of success. MOSA sees this as an effect of the victim status — success creates almost an imposter feeling for the candidate because the unreal sterotypes of Nyoongah culture are not realized.

There are undoubtedly many other culturally based characteristics which may effect the teachers' expectations and the self concept of the learner. It is my strong contention that many of these inhibiting features are best realized and overcome if the learning process, reflects the care and influence of Nyoongah culture. Jack Davis wrote in Scene 9 of his play "The Dreamers"

> "you have turned our land into a desolate place
> we stumble along with a half white mind,
> Where are we,
> What are we,
> Not a recognised race,
> There is a desert ahead and a desert behind."

There is only desert ahead, if our Nyoongah learners are not nurtured by our own cultural nutrients, if we do not feed to our learners the seeds to grow within our cultural identity, we are in danger of creating the half white mind and perpetuating that desert, bare and barren of Nyoongah consciousness.

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Chapter 15

EVEN DESERT KIDS NEED HEROES

By Bob Capp

Background

On the face of it, the border region of W.A., S.A. and the N.T. has very good education facilities, a low pupil-teacher ratio, much work has been done on curriculum development and the departments concerned are very supportive. Yet everywhere there is a ground swell along the lines 'The school is not giving the children the teaching they need'; I learned to read English in a bough shed, yet my kids have been to school for years and still can't read properly' or 'TAFE, what are they doing?' The credibility gap is enormous.

After years of official policies of 'self-determination' and 'self-management' there is still a gulf between the competence of local people and the needs of administration in their own communities. These policies depended on work-oriented education for their effective implementation. The Uwankara Palyanyku Kanyintjaku (environmental health) review (1) has drawn attention to the rise in the hazards of community living — the modern infrastructure is causing new and serious health problems. Health education doesn't seem to have made much impact. Outsiders are working in almost every community doing jobs that community members should have taken over years ago. Clearly, education has fallen well short of the mark in every field.

Training is at about Number 10 on the duty statements of nearly all outsiders' positions in communities but they are kept so busy with the hands-on tasks that training gets inevitably left till 'later' — and is rarely carried through. Yet facilities for pre-school, primary, and post primary schooling are available in every major community and ad-hoc arrangements can be made for further education on the Lands, in regional centres or in the major cities.

In tribal Aboriginal communities, however, education was never conceived of as a separable entity, Anangu considered children as 'persons' the same as adults. They have not yet invented "childhood", Western society didn't focus on it until the child labour controversy during the Industrial Revolution when schooling became necessary for workers to be literate (2). Aboriginal children discovered the increasing complexities of life simply living with their family, peers and respected community members. Education had no special priority. A busy, interesting and emotionally satisfying lifestyle eliminated any need for specific focus.

Contacts with outside forces were to change all this. The traditional penchant was for fully exploring and experiencing the environment, for "being" rather than "doing". The new technology and ideas had to be tried out and assessed. In any event the contact between the two cultures rapidly gained momentum and became a psychologically destructive clash. Essentially, the people seemed to badly want the things of the Western, technology-oriented culture. Western cultured individuals and Governments have felt under pressure to see that these "poor" people weren't deprived of their share of Western culture's advantages.

BOB CAPP, 9 Roscorla Avenue, Yokine W.A. 6060

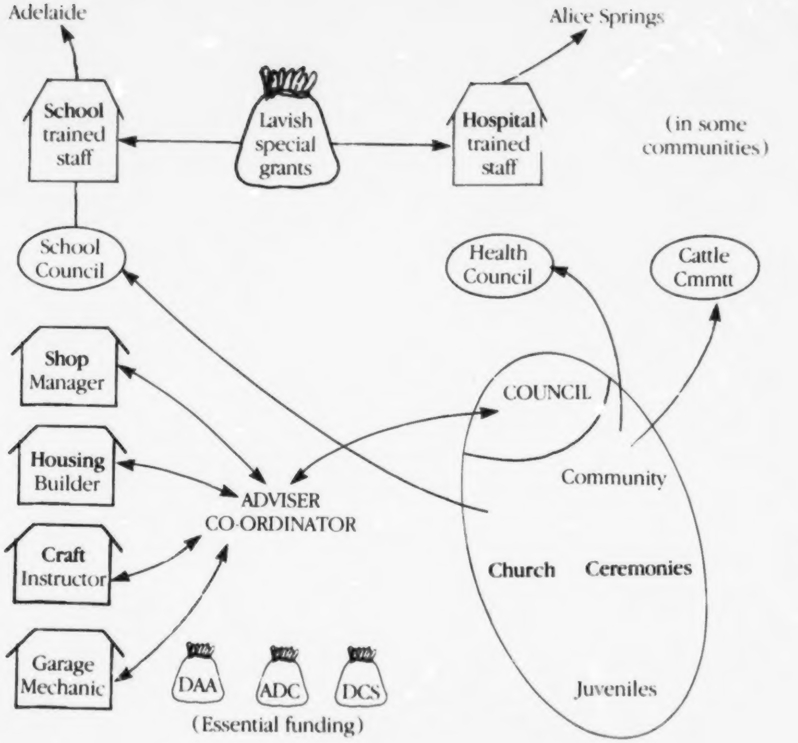
Adelaide
Alice Springs
School trained staff
Lavish special grants
Hospital trained staff
(in some communities)
School Council
Health Council
Cattle Cmmtt
Shop Manager
COUNCIL
Housing Builder
Community
ADVISER CO-ORDINATOR
Craft Instructor
Church
Ceremonies
Garage Mechanic
DAA
ADC
DCS
(Essential funding)
Juveniles

Diagram 1
In this model the non-Aboriginal experts have become the power brokers.

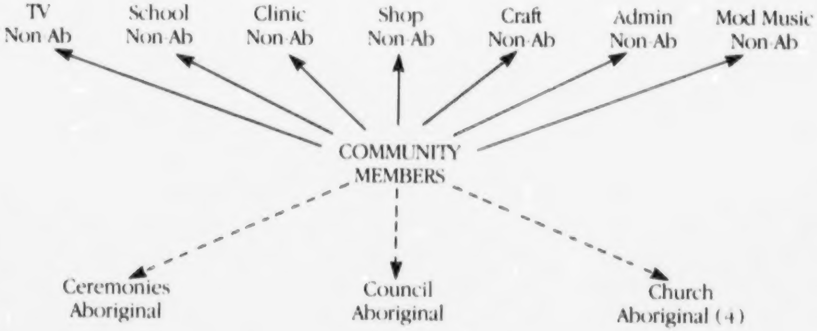
TV Non-Ab
School Non-Ab
Clinic Non-Ab
Shop Non-Ab
Craft Non-Ab
Admin Non-Ab
Mod Music Non-Ab
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
Ceremonies Aboriginal
Council Aboriginal
Church Aboriginal (4)

Diagram 2
The "ideological" perspective.

The present authority pattern in the larger communities is something like Diagram 1 (3). The fragmented situation pictured has the school and sometimes other institutions reporting to outside authorities. Their local committees are not necessarily linked to the community council. The specialist community staff often relate more directly with the community adviser rather than with the council. Education, although not regarded as such a high priority among community members as a whole, gets a lion's share of funding. Essentially indigenous activities such as ceremonial, church, and youth programmes have only got whatever was left over.

These diagrams are schematic. Anangu are attempting to indigenize the items labelled in Diagram 2 as 'non-Aboriginal'. The point is that those activities which non-Aborigines can readily relate to are those which get the most attention and, usually, funds. In a sense, there has seemed to be no alternative to expatriate experts taking over the direction of these, now dominant and well-funded aspects of community life. There weren't any locals in the beginning and there are only a few now, who can realistically aspire to most of these functional roles in the communities. The activities which they can run effectively — which are obviously less well funded — are made to seem relatively unimportant. Older people find this distressing.

The inescapable fact is that there are a lot of new things and ideas that Anangu have to get to know about if they are to recover the initiative. The question is what is the most positive, non-destructive way for this to be done.

Education Socialization versus Brainwashing

The vast changes going on in these tribal communities must have profoundly affected the adults; the community leaders; parents. Nevertheless, the major priority has continued to be given to child education. This is pointless if community development was intended. Social change has never been led by children. Certainly compulsory education was an obvious necessity during the industrial revolution, but even then children had some culturally relevant role models. Education in the Central Desert borderlands fails because the education services provided are expected to function with so few credible role models with whom the children can identify. (Those keen young teachers would be good role models in a country town. But not so in those tribal communities.) Education cannot be effective unless it comes equipped with role models. The Aboriginal Education Workers could be role models, but they are denied the authority.

The quest for identity has been a theme running through Aboriginal affairs for over a quarter of a century. It is a term Catherine Berndt borrowed from psychology (5). Every human being on the road to mature personality development tries to establish for himself an integrated pattern of values which he perceives has the elements of "the good life". He tends to "identify" with significant "role models" around him who exhibit this "good life". He matures as he, intuitively, pieces together, what he perceives as the integrated system of values which will enable him to cope with most of life's situations.

There are a number of ways of integrating value systems. Groups of people who are related or live, work and play together usually have common values. These systems are the elements of a culture or sub-culture. To make sense to the developing personality the elements must integrate, or be 'congruent' as Coombs et al put it in "A Certain Heritage" (6). A culture in all its elements is passed on by a process of *"socialization"*. Individuals in the community, important to the developing person, interact with him so that he voluntarily embraces the same cultural elements as they have done, internalizing them as his own.

A young person's role models might be peers, 'heroes', siblings, parents, teachers or community leaders. They may not always be good models. The more mature models may, themselves, adopt and integrate some values and attitudes from another culture. If these new elements can be judged as fitting in with everything else which forms their group culture, then culture change is occurring. The circumstances are congruent. If these role models are people important to the developing person he will be unconsciously adopting cultural change.

Re-socialization refers to the "abandonment of one way of life for another that is not only different from the former but incompatible with it"(7). A mild, usually voluntary form is military training or taking religious orders. "Brainwashing" as practiced in totalitarian regimes, is a more extreme version usually compulsory, usually maintained by threat of violence and accompanied by psychological trauma. The critical steps are:

- isolation from the familiar point of reference;
- being made helpless and dependent on captors;
- destroying the old identity;
- recognizing one's former wretchedness;
- being offered a new and acceptable identity; and
- commitment to and participation in, this new identity (8).

It doesn't take much imagination to see just how accurately this process was applied to many Aboriginal communities in Australia, including the younger Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Yanangu Ngaanyatjarra and to a lesser extent even the more recently contacted Yanangu Pintupi.

Attempting to educate children using people who are not important to them, in an incongruent environment, whether it be deliberate, or from insufficient background information, or inappropriately trained teachers: the process is still re-socialization. The tragedy is not only that it has happened at all but that it has been perpetrated most determinedly on children and as re-socialization it has been done very badly — look at the results. It was not 're-socialization': only 'de-socialization'.

Over the years critics of the Aboriginal education scene have seen the solution to lie with better selection and training of non-Aboriginal teachers for these schools. They seem to have been oblivious of the destructive nature of the system they wanted improved. The 1986 report into S.A. Aboriginal Post-Primary Education "To Break Through the Wall" does it again (9). Courses have, indeed been set up at CAEs and universities. Yet, for some reason, the graduates don't seem to find their way into these Aboriginal schools.

Because schools have been so manifestly incongruent with the social environment of both home and community, Coombs et al (10) are insistent that Aboriginal children should be taught by Aborigines in a culturally congruent situation:

> "Aboriginal teachers . . . have primary responsibility for face-to-face teaching functions (Recommendation (17);
>
> "Aboriginal teachers should be encouraged to adapt school organization (e.g. grouping of students) so that relationships, age, sex etc, respect Aboriginal attitudes (Recommendation 18);
>
> "Material prepared for Aboriginal schools should be compatible with Aboriginal learning styles . . ." (Recommendation 19);
>
> "Regional resource centres should be established to support Aboriginal teachers in Aboriginal controlled schools . . ." (Recommendation 20); and so on.

Some Historical Background — South Australia

Schooling in the vernacular (Pitjantjatjara) began at Ernabella in the late thirties. Its purpose was simple — to enable Aborigines to read the Bible translations being prepared in their own language. The program developed over the years to include English teaching. Later still this was broadened to include other subjects to begin to approach basic primary education. At about this time the state assumed responsibility and other schools were opened across the north-west of the state.

The broad effect of this 'find out for yourself' approach of the mission and their more enlightened attitude to Aboriginal traditional culture was a more positive response to the role of schooling in the life of the young. Although the tensions between the races has heightened and the relevance of the current schooling has moved away from community perceptions, there is still a latent optimism for useful educational outcomes, particularly among the middle aged adults.

Northern Territory

Settlements at Papunya, Areyonga and Docker River were set up under the Welfare Branch and pushed assimilation as their ideological basis. Even up to the late 70's I encountered old hands still in the education administration who bemoaned the abandonment of the clear cut intentions of the Harry Geise era. Assimilation was a policy of deliberate re-socialization and was rightly changed: but the ghosts continue to haunt the schools because the parents of today were the students of that era.

School is still seen as the 'work' children have to do. It lacks role models so there is still no obvious valuable outcome so there is little or no parental push or motivating achievement.

Western Australia

Warburton was a mission settlement which set up a children's home as both a haven for children from marauding white prospectors, surveyors and would-be pastoralists, and as a way of indoctrinating the thus captive (child) congregation with the Gospel. Aboriginal culture was satanic, they said, and such a segregated upbringing could only be in the children's best interests.

The state entered the battle by providing a more permanent and consistent teaching establishment. Part of the deal was setting up hostels in the Goldfields towns for children from the Central Reserve to attend high school. The profound destabilization of this away-from-home experience is measureable by high correlation between those so "educated" and adults with continuing serious alcohol problems. There are a few notable exceptions. But not enough to provide sufficient role models for the present generation of school children.

The high profile of education has left the perception that no one can do anything worthwhile in the communities without proper training: on-the-job training does not lead to *real* qualification. The only hope for present day children is to have access to secondary education. Yet attempts to discover from parents the specific parameters of their expectations for their children are met with a handful of respondents and a string of cliches. They have rarely been called on to utilize their school learning in work situations and cannot be specific.

Some Justifications for Interstate Co-operation

For a number of years now there have been murmurings for some co-ordination of education services around the border regions of the Musgrave Ranges, Ayers Rock and Warburton areas. I have not been involved in any of the serious discussions which have been held over the last two years but I have taught in this region in all three state systems and have some idea of some of the issues.

1. Movement Between States

Family and cultural links throughout the region have meant that there is often movement interstate. Wingellina (W.A.) and Pipalyatjara (S.A.) are 20 km apart! A group may choose to stay "interstate" for a period of months. Children going to school in the next community have to adapt to a different education system, perhaps even several times a year.

2. Bilingual Programs

There has been much more contact between the Territory and the S.A. schools in recent years with consequent exchange of materials. There was a time when the Territory schools had the best access to publishing facilities and S.A. had the more useful materials. However, co-operation is still largely on a basis of interstate goodwill rather than any obligation to do so.

3. English Language Programs

The Territory had the best tried English language program. S.A. then developed its own. W.A. still has no English language program suitable for students who speak an Aboriginal language. Whatever the genesis of these situations, travel interstate across the Central Desert and you must learn to cope with another English teaching program. There is plenty of scope for basic curriculum development and preparation of materials across this region. Teachers need some serious workshopping on second language teaching methodology: in-service conferences, regular visits from language experts — a syllabus and text books on their own are quite inadequate.

4. Secondary Education

There has been a lot of discussion and conferencing on this topic for a good many years now. The lack of such facilities in the past has been seen as a cause of petrol sniffing. Well, the Territory has its Yirara College — Pitjantjatjara kids stay away in droves. S.A. schools have their post-primary classes and their try-out scheme in Adelaide and this seems to be facing problems. W.A. schools have their new secondary facilities at each of their remote schools — but absenteeism is most common amongst teenagers. Before that students went to Norseman Mission and attended the town High School. None of these remedies seem to satisfy the needs of the situation. There is plenty of scope for some regional resolution of this problem in education.

5. **Teacher Recruitment, Support and Development**

S.A. has tended to try to attract teachers with some claim to suitability for the job. Supervisory staff have tried to provide some kind of 'pastoral' support and the Department has provided funds for in service conferences. Some teachers have remained in the area for a number of years and done a very good job.

The N.T. situation has tended to be a take-what-you-get system of recruitment, a fairly bureaucratized personnel management and some conferences occasionally. Things have freed up in more recent years. There is a bit more competition for places and morale is higher.

W.A. used to run their remote schools as to some kind of frontier endurance test with maximum terms of two years. Now principals get a promotional bonus but there seems to be little professional incentive for teachers to consider their Aboriginal School service as an educational challenge.

6. **Aboriginal Teachers**

Aboriginal teachers who have been accredited in any way other than full CAE type training still tend to be regarded as second class teachers. Aboriginal Education Workers are basically monitors whom some "trained" teachers give more or less responsibility. This is certainly the case in the West and the South. The Territory seems to be leading the field with their combination of Batchelor College training and their Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) on the job scheme.

The Anangu Teacher Education Program (S.A.C.A.E.) has some really good ideas and the potential to provide good training for teachers. However, although the training provided may be just what the trainees need and the graduates just what the children need, they don't seem to fit the needs of the schools. Now that doesn't make sense.

The West is expanding the Traditional Aboriginal Teacher Education (TATE) program into the Central Reserve area.

7. **Educational Technology**

Considering the remoteness of these communities the solutions to the needs for experts and resources will be extremely expensive. There are relatively few students in the various schools. Also the homeland communities are even more isolated and cut off. Modern developments in distance education utilizing radio, telephone, computer and video facilities must be considered.

8. **Further Education**

In W.A. and the Territory there is almost nothing happening at all. The leaders in the field in the border areas has to be S.A. Given the constraints under which they have to function they have made contributions over a period of years and have built on their experience. Their programs have included short topical courses, on-the-job type training, short-term trade courses, admin-related courses. They have initiated non-formal education through community newspapers. They have set up courses in Adelaide for students from the Musgraves. There is probably more which could be said and mostly all complimentary. Probably the most impressive aspect of their involvement is the obvious commitment of individuals concerned. I hope they, above all others involved in education in the region, will understand what I am on about when I suggest serious modifications to the approach to education generally. I hope they will not interpret my thesis as simply white anting their well planned set up.

However education is reorganized, adults must get the first look at the demystified universe. Their learning needs must receive the priority consideration. Thus, Adult Education whether organized by TAFE and ANTEP or some other arrangement should have first claim on staff and resources. Also a wide range of demystifying general information must be disseminated among the adult population. Parents, aware of the advantages of basic skills and the acquisition of knowledge, will see to it that their children's education isn't ignored!

Petrol Sniffing, the Tragedy of a Destructive Youth Culture

Michael Christie, believes that peer groups in schools can mount a determined opposition to purposeful learning (11). Ralph Folds puts forward the notion of the existence of a resistance on the part of the teenage boys and sees a link between this resistance and petrol sniffing (12). Virginia Satir asserts that children are profoundly affected by problems troubling their parents (13). Perhaps the Christie and Folds theses are about kids responding to their parents' frustrations. Petrol sniffing and other delinquency may indeed be in some measure political acts: that is to imply, in this context, acts motivated by a *group* ideology. There is, however, sufficient hard evidence of personality disturbance among the young and not so young to point to some other causes. They seem to be acting out the frustrations of kids with very low *individual* self esteem. Some deaths from petrol sniffing are so close to being attributable to suicide. The addicts seem so determined to maintain their habit in spite of the fact that it is likely to be fatal and in spite of strenuous efforts on the part of relatives to stop them.

It is arguable that having —

- non Aboriginal authority figures in charge of the school and the classroom activities;
- curriculae based on non Aboriginal criteria;
- programs run according to non Aboriginal guidelines;
- discipline imposed by non Aboriginal guidelines;
- no credible role models to emulate

that the schools are stressful institutions — the stresses which can lead to such tension relief activities as hydrocarbon inhalation.

There is a wide gap between school learning and work. School is for kids. Since there is very little work for them, teenagers are largely left to their own devices, until

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they have to get some money to support a family. Girls can sometimes find something to do in the craft rooms and shops. Teenage boys, however, are not required to do anything at all. Schooling seems to block the continuity that Aboriginal social life furnishes between its various natural (and cultural) phases (14). Many parents in the region assert that those boys need access to 'appropriate' schooling to prepare them for work — as well as keep them out of mischief!

At present this group tend to be completely unsupervised and frequently engage in delinquent behaviour. Groome asserts that they are torn by frustration of not being part of the challenges their fathers faced growing up in the bush. At the same time, they are attracted to the experiences and artefacts of the 'new way'. Since their age denies them access to the status of worker and their frustrated delinquency ostracizes them from community acceptance, their self-esteem plummets (15). To re-impose the constraints of the old order simply heightens their alienation.

This is most unfortunate. Pitjantjatjara youth from around fourteen years of age, known as 'kungkatja' were expected to spend time with the fully segregated 'nyinka' group. They fetched and carried for them, learnt hunting skills and were shown the first secret ceremonies. The nyinkas were in turn answerable to the young initiates, the 'wati minu' who in their turn are responsible to the ceremonial leaders. This meant that they were under the tutelage of their 'heroes': their own chosen role models. There was a direct link through this hierarchy to the older men: the custodians of the Tjukurpa. This process is formalized in Walpiri country with a long period of segregation known as "High School".

So then, it is the social context of child education which needs to be looked at. Kids are under stress. Yet the child education program must be as free of tension as is possible if it is to *participate in* the socialization of those children for mature educated adulthood. When a settled social climate is achieved then conditions will favour high academic achievements.

Re-appraising Aboriginal Education for Tribal Children

The practical problems set in place by the lines on the map may not be completely insurmountable. However, did you notice that all the reasons mentioned earlier were concerned with improving the efficiency of the status quo: making the re-socialization process work: continuing to change tribally cultured children into non-Aboriginal culture children. This is not what tribal parents want. They want their sons and daughters to achieve their maturity as Aboriginal cultured adults.

The question is how to turn the present situation on its head. Part of the answer must be sought in the politics of the exercise. We are talking about *power*, the *language of power (English)*, and the ***demystification of Western culture***. At the same time we are talking about ***maximising the intellectual development of a cultured people*** from childhood through to mature adulthood with clear perceptions of their own identity as modern day Aborigines. To achieve this we must tidy up the game plan starting with the rules (the Tjukurpa), the administrators (Tjilpi Tjuta), the coaches (community leaders and teachers), the top players (role models) down to the newest recruits (none of whom are white!).

Power Anangu Principals and Teachers

The ideology behind the Central Australian view of their land rights struggle is the primacy of the Tjukurpa as the basis for land ownership. If the community government can be informed by the seniority of the Tjilpi Tjuta, the learning environment of the children must be also. The Tjukurpa must have a position of authority over the school manifested in the personnel in authority and the dominant values of the school system.

Pitjantjatjara Education Workers have been asserting for a number of years that they should be given more authority in classrooms. Last year, one Education Worker very tentatively asserted — and her colleagues agreed — that they should have a major input in social studies, which is, incidentally, the major vehicle for teaching values!

Kevin Rogers, an Aboriginal Principal in the Northern Territory said:

> My community wants to see the European continue working as a supporter, a resource person and a capable trainer (16).

Coombs et al (17) recommend that:

> Where Aborigines desire it, non-Aboriginal teachers should become and be re-trained to work as advisers, consultants and resource persons for Aboriginal teachers *who would have primary responsibility for face to face teacher functions.*

In several places in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and overseas, local people with minimal formal training are running classrooms while engaged in *on the job training.* Trained teachers, locals and expatriate, have responsibility for assistance in programming and tutoring for two or more of the classroom teachers. I have asserted elsewhere that, with professional support, untrained Aboriginal teachers can do it. The school social environment is more comfortable. Attendances rocket to near 100%. Teachers' and pupils' achievements improve out of sight, including in English (18).

Such an arrangement in the region concerned would satisfy

- ideological aspirations: the dominant value orientation of the schools would be that of the controlling group — the Aboriginal Principals and teachers;
- political aspirations: they would have control of the curriculum, the school policy, the program and the day to day running of the school; and
- the need for appropriate role models so conspicuously absent from the present set up and so essential for the stress-free, personality development of young people in the community.

Such an arrangement could be set up and made to work. Fewer trained expatriates would be needed. They would be able to concentrate on training without the responsibility for the directions of curriculum development or the hands-on running of the school.

English the Key to Power

A second political consideration would have to be English acquisition. This is a vexed question. Lobbying to develop secondary education stems from, among other things, low achievement levels in primary English (19).

Schools don't seem able to motivate pupils to perform in English although they have had a number of years to work up a fairly good program to follow. The situation is exacerbated when pupils are not regular attenders.

Yet there is this widely held belief that English competency is the key to power (20). It is also widely believed that there is a conspiracy to prevent power falling into Aboriginal hands by withholding access to this key to power. This belief is reinforced by:

- the low achievement levels of the majority of the children;
- the difficulties that some adults have had trying to obtain instruction on occasions in the past; and
- the ease with which officials from external agencies can retain the initiative in negotiations by not tempering the level of their English to that of their clients.

Only a few Anangu have the ability to keep up with the discussions in meetings where English is the main language. Good English speakers can become the power brokers (21), regardless of standing in the community; a situation which promotes an unfair access to resources.

In an article some years ago I quoted a young man as saying: "White children speak English and learn Pitjantjatjara easily (referring to staff children), but Pitjantjatjara children can't learn English. Obviously white children are more intelligent." This is a fairly common misconception (22). In the first place staff children — a minority group of the juvenile population — spend much of their play time with vernacular speaking children learning language in the most unartificial of learning environments. Secondly, Aboriginal children have been shown to have high levels of ability in cognitive skills (23).

Many are convinced that the emphasis on the value of vernacular literacy in bilingual programs is simply the 'cover up' to the conspiracy to prevent kids learning English properly. This whole controversy is nevertheless rather curious. Most tribal people are able to speak several dialects and frequently different languages as well.

Teachers in bilingual schools would strenuously deny they are part of any conspiracy. They would assert that the strength of a bilingual approach lies in the advantages children, who are literate in their own language, have in learning a second language.

Aboriginal teachers elsewhere see English competency as less important than the capacity of a bilingual program to

(1) enhance Aboriginal self esteem; and

(2) reinforce Aboriginal identity and culture (24).

At one community meeting with the Bonner Review team a spirited advocacy of English only schooling as essential for progress was followed by statements from others strongly supporting the bilingual program on the ground that mother tongue competence was essential for survival of the culture.

The Department has permitted one school to run an English only program. Provided that there was a reasonably uniform English language curriculum in operation throughout the Lands, there would seem to be no valid argument against the same happening at any other community school. The indigenous culture is strong at the moment. Whether that will continue is the moot point but that debate need not change the present short term political realities.

Few of the teachers sent to work in this region, have had any training in language teaching let alone anything as direct as Teaching English as a Second Language. Teachers without this background tend to find the repetitious oral practice required to be tedious and their pupils hard to motivate.

Assume that the notion of Anangu occupying positions of authority in the schools before they have actually qualified, is acceptable. Their tutors should also be required to maintain their instructional role, utilizing initial teaching lessons in English as demonstration lessons where accurate pronunciation modelling would be important for the students and teachers with tape-recorders, listening posts and other aids as required.

It is, nevertheless, questionable that expatriate teachers must be wholly responsible for English teaching, as some Aboriginal supporters of the English-only approach assert. So few of those appointed so far have had any special expertise in this subject area. With good aids, better attendance, better rapport with pupils, Anangu teachers should not discount their own abilities in this sensitive area of English teaching. With good quality taped material to assist with pronunication they should manage quite well.

Homeland education is another problem area. The N.T.'s English-based "School of the Bush" program is more or less "copyrighted" and not really available to other state systems. There is some revision necessary for some units but a wider market should attract some income to finance further development. A homeland teacher could run this program alone, or as the English component of a bilingual program if the community wished. There is plenty [illegible]terial available to develop local Pitjantjatjara reading programs.

De-mystification of Western Culture

Anangu need general information about many subjects in these days of rapid social change. There is still too much mystery about non Aboriginal activity. The tendency has been to communicate with clients about the operator's field of competency only and almost only in working hours. True self determination is about people having information upon which to base decisions. A wide-ranging program of *non formal education* would go a long way towards opening discussion about more formal courses of instruction for students of all ages not just children.

Community newspapers are printed at most S.A. border communities. These are widely read. Ernabella Video and TV produce material for local and Imparija (Alice Springs) transmission — operating on a shoe string. These are very important projects which deserve support and encouragement.

The initiative has been slowly prized away from the people. Much of the work they ought to be taking on themselves is being done by expatriates. As a community priority, training seems less urgent than it might have been. Although they have the benefit of experience in useful course content and have researched learning needs in their area, TAFE (S.A.) now tends to wait until called on before becoming involved either in tutoring or mounting courses.

A factor in this decline is that training even in an apprentice type relationship requires a trainer. Few community staff have the skills necessary (25). There is plenty of evidence

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of genuine commitment from non-Anangu. Too frequently it is clear that those who are supposed to be training an understudy tend to give up and simply do the work required themselves. Local people, supposed to be understudying for a responsible position, are often only token incumbents.

Anangu, thus, need information on a lot of specific areas of activity and *on-the-job training* in the skills to manipulate the technology and ideas for the efficient running of community affairs. If the theory behind the advancement of Anangu to serve as principals and teachers is valid, it applies equally to all positions and activities in the community. There needs to be a re-definition of both the positions of authority and the duties assigned to them in all departments. Anangu should occupy all the redefined positions and staff re-assigned as tutors, retrained if necessary.

Older Anangu have also indicated to earlier researchers (26) that they want to learn some of the subjects their children learn in school. Some may be content with basic functional literacy. Others may wish to go further. A more *general education* would also better prepare those who could consider spending time in the city for specialized training.

A College on the Lands

Consider the needs from political, sociological and educational points of view. Consider the staffing and infrastructural requirements. Then place these against the currently available facilities and presently approved staffing establishments. The notion highlighted by previous researchers in South Australia — a College on the Lands — makes good practical sense.

Steel studied Anangu opinions on adult education needs and how they could best be met (27). He cites as advantages:-

(1) All other modes (of adult training) can be operated through this mode (of education).
(2) Eliminates the loneliness encountered by students away from home.
(3) No threat from problems of the city.
(4) No community distractions.
(5) Adequate facilities are available.
(6) Efficient use of staff.
(7) Efficient use of equipment/resources.
(8) Reduced travel. More courses could be run.
(9) Fewer vehicles required.
(10) Educators can get colleague support.
(11) No need for lecturers to live in communities.
(12) No dependency on educators.
(13) Anangu have been asking for this for years.

Groome also refers to a "Rural College" (28) which he sees catering for young people of post school age as well as adults. DAA evidence to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education foresaw the establishment of "annexes in the larger communities which would be outposts of a full TAFE College in a more centralized location" (29).

Control

Consider something like this:

Regional Aboriginal Organization
(Pitjantjatjara Council?)
|
Education Committee
|
Full time Committee Chairman
as College Principal (Anangu)
|
Senior Lecturer
(probably expatriate)
|

Course Lecturers	Field Tutors Trainers	Admin Staff

Staff

In addition to appointed course lecturers on campus all the expatriate staff in the communities should be responsible for on-the-job training programs through the College administrative structure to the regional Aboriginal organization. This would include staff running teacher education type programs. Anangu with appropriate skills should certainly be considered for appointment. Specialist staff could be brought in from co-operating colleges (TAFE and CAE) for short term courses. Staff in field locations should be employed by their local community.

Facilities

Several *lecture rooms* already exist at Ernabella at the Resource Centre and the ANTEP unit. There is already ample equipment for a "College" to begin operations. Teacher trainers in the schools should only need to number about half the present establishment of expatriate teachers. This should make *housing* available for on-campus staff at Ernabella and free up housing at other centres. The *Mechanical Trade Centre* at Ernabella could be refurbished as the site for a variety of trades courses. A horticultural program could be set up using facilities which have been in use hitherto for this purpose. It has been proposed that facilities be set up at Fregon for Store Worker training. There could be some de-centralization in the West and the North of the border without threat to the overall program. Facilities exist in some of the communities which could be adapted for use in such a program.

On-the-Job/Block Release Training/Short Courses (30)

The Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program and the N.T. Health Department Health Worker training program are run on this method. Students are required to cover a syllabus of work related skills, under supervision, complete work-related assignments, then attend block release sessions at some centre at regular intervals. Because the numbers of students on the Lands are not great, the on campus sessions for all training disciplines could be timetabled to make almost full time utilization of the existing facilities. Block Release sessions in some study programs could also function as *short courses*. Credits would derive from both the on the job skills syllabus as well as the short courses. Such a program would permit some flexibility of entry to an accreditation program and exit whenever the candidate wished. The methodology could be applied to the following subject areas:

The S.A.C.A.E Anangu **Teacher Education** Program (ANTEP), the Batchelor College Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) and the W.A.C.A.E. Traditional Aboriginal Teacher Education (TATE) programs are currently conceived of as offering tertiary qualifications to graduates. These programs would need to be revised to integrate and cope with the on the job training requirements of classroom teachers, including teachers in homeland schools. The concept of Aboriginal Education Worker could become obsolete with the replacement of the expatriate classroom teachers unless they become the "teacher aides" to Anangu classroom teachers.

Community Management is probably the most crucial study program not yet under way on the Lands. Short courses have been run in the past in all three states but not in any consistent fashion. This could require some extra staff particularly in the initial stages. Topics to be covered could include management, bookkeeping accounting, typing word processing, business computing and community development. (The PC Accounting Service is already offering some training to communities using their services).

Store Management training is to be set up by Anangu Winkiku Stores at Fregon in the foreseeable future involving lecture room facilities and residential accommodation for twelve students. It should be noted that some community management and store management studies could overlap. If the training locations are to be different it will still be important that the syllabii should not conflict. Differences in community and store management style have generated problems in some communities in the past.

Community Nursing should be considered, like teaching, as a tertiary level program with multiple exits. The immediate need is definitely for more Anangu nurses with the basic skills. The N.T. health worker program has been running well for a number of years now. It has a well planned syllabus, capable of modification to cope with changing conditions. Health workers could do a lot worse than joining this program, at least in the short term. Apparently there would be no objection from the N.T. However, the College should look to developing open ended courses so that those now known as "health workers" could continue study to qualify as state enrolled nurses if they so desired. (This latter qualification may not be practicable on the Lands but the College should be able to better prepare candidates for courses elsewhere).

Trade Training programs should be planned with long term full apprentice type syllabii with the option of withdrawing at the end of any semester without forfeiting credit for work done to that point. College records would record progress achieved and any student could resume his course at a later date, or change streams. A range of tradesmen exists across the Lands to act as trainers.

General Education programs need to be available in English language and literacy, basic maths and other subjects according to need. Short courses in special interest topics should also be considered. Community government for councillors is one suggested to the review on one occasion but there is no end to the topics which might be considered. Some students could consider attending courses in Adelaide for which good achievements in English, maths and other subjects could be necessary pre requisites.

Post School Training — 15 years and over

It was put to the Bonner Review last year that older teenage boys (16 plus years old) need to be required to conform to traditional segregated training. We were also told that they should receive appropriate non-traditional education. Older men, who might act as role models, are caught up in their community work program and are mostly out of touch with this group. As mentioned earlier, Groome attributes their behavious to a paradox. On the one hand, frustration at being denied the challenges their father faced growing up in the bush; on the other, a powerful attraction to the experiences and artefacts on the 'new way'. Too young to work, too delinquent to trust, their self esteem is limited (31). Bringing back the old rules for their own sake will endorse their low self esteem and convince them that the rule makers have no idea what to do with them.

To cater for this group the education process must 'congruently' (32) embrace the following criteria:

- be interesting and challenging;
- maintain traditional constraints and cultural continuity;
- involve appropriate role models;
- include effective English teaching; and
- prepare students for entry to the local work force.

None of this should prejudice opportunities of access to further education. Groome calls his version "transition education" (33).

A classroom with basic facilities including a dormitory with cooking, laundry and ablutions, outside each community could provide the location for basic secondary learning for this group. There would need to be at least two local supervisors to cope with the avoidance relationships between skin groups. Married couples need not be excluded provided their living quarters were some reasonable distance from the dormitory and other facilities; wives could be responsible for catering. Arrangements should be made for them to be included in local adult training programs and main stream courses at the College whenever possible. Times would have to be arranged when women were not present. Supervisors would be able to continue their studies with College staff. Students from this group with the ability would be able to join courses in Alice Springs, Kalgoorlie, Adelaide or Perth without compromising their ceremonial status. A similar arrangement, minus the avoidance considerations and located within the community perimeter, could be set up for teenage girls ("kungawara").

For organizational purposes it would be preferable for these groups to be under the direction of their Council as 'adult' training activities rather than through the school

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principal. During this period, youths are accorded an adult honorific form of address: attachment to adult institutions would be most appropriate.

Secondary Education — 11 to 14 years

It was put to the review that separate classess for boys and girls could be useful from age 11 to 14 years and beyond. Anangu seem to feel that this is 'right':

They (girls and boys) don't mix, only when they are little is it all right. When they (boys) get bigger they are not allowed to mix with the girls because when he knows that business then he'll be causing trouble, all the time . . . . (34).

Given an Anangu controlled school with Anangu as class teachers these "secondary classes" would top off the more formal school-based education. It would be useful for teachers from these upper school groups to be tutored by programmer/trainers with secondary teaching experience. This should better prepare them for the "nyinka" and "kungawara" learning centres.

Groome has urged the setting up of a fairly complicated secondary schooling facility he has called the Anangu High School. Because of the logistical problems of the dispersed student body on the Lands, the ultimate site for the main study centre he proposed would have to be in Adelaide. Given the problems he has perceived in the communities there is some sense in his recommendations. However, he noted that students returning from their stint in Adelaide under the present arrangements were often unsettled (35).

A significant factor with the high number of alcoholics in some remote W.A. communities was that almost all of them had been taken from their remote tribal homelands to centres such as Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Esperence or Perth for secondary schooling. For many of these people there has been a very significant level of de-socialization. They now are frequently unaware of important tribal traditions, ignorant about traditional foods and hunting techniques and some are poor speakers of both their own language and English. Some of them were trained in skills, ostensibly for work in rural, urban or industrial settings. Organizers could not see that they were dealing with youngsters very attached to home and family. The skills they had learned were not marketabie in their home community. Communities in those areas also have had significant petrol sniffing problems.

Groome sees the multi-campus Anangu High School offering places to high achievers, with good study habits and strong parental support (35). It would appear that students attempting study away from the psychological security of home must also have a high level of maturity to be able to cope with the social environment of education. It is doubtful if this would be possible for anyone under seventeen, the mean age for initiation. If a student has complied with the academic requirements of child schooling to age fourteen and satisfied the academic and cultural requirements of the "nyinka" program to age seventeen, he would have a better chance of success away from home.

Non-Formal Education

The community newspapers and Ernabella Video and T.V. are making determined efforts to inform the community on a wide range of subjects. News is important, of course. Well presented local content bolsters community self-esteem. Local interpretation of events outside the Lands enhances the assimilation of knowledge about things, places, people and events as they bear on Anangu. Articles or videos on relevant topics inform the Pitjantjatjara view of the world.

It is important that adults get the first look at the demystified universe. Their learning needs must receive the priority consideration. A wide range of demystifying general information must be disseminated among the adult population. As mentioned before, parents, aware of the advantages of basic skills and the acquisition of knowledge, will see to it that their children's education isn't ignored!

Homeland Education

This subject poses some of the same problems which face small communities anywhere in Australia. With a good teacher the "Rural School" is about as good as any other — but for the stimulus of peers. However, given that Anangu teachers are more successful with Anangu children, how can we work them into a successful homeland school? The Northern Territory have developed their English based "School of the Bush" programs designed for homeland schools. It is expected the classes will be in the charge of someone from the homeland community and advised by regular sessions with a homeland school "visiting tutor" who is a trained teacher. In many of the N.T. homelands the local teacher is also working through the Remote Area Teacher Education program from Batchelor.

Homelands can only hope to have assured access to basic education. The requirements in every homeland will be fairly uniform. The School of the Bush program consists of a series of graded lessons covering all the primary grades, tied to student's booklets and teachers' manuals. Should a homeland community wish children to learn Pitjantjatjara literacy as well, there are plenty of materials available. Technological advances could provide access to staff and resources at larger schools or centres via telephone, radio, slow-scan TV and even computer-data links.

Summary

Provided that

1. the Ministers' Management Board give the general proposal their wholehearted support (people on the W.A. side have always been put down by the common assertion that 'proper (away-from-home) training' is obligatory for any important community jobs);
2. then, having established the principles of operation, step aside and allow the Regional Organization to function as the controlling body (they have clear ideas of what they want for their own children and have no need of yet another bureaucracy to hold the reins of power);
3. and assuming that all agencies currently involved wholeheartedly co-operate in the smooth transition from centralized to Aboriginal regionalized control;

then the stage will be set for some magnificent progress in social and educational outcomes throughout this area.

Streamlining of any permutation of the present system is always possible. The bureaucratic framework is already in place. All that is missing is the hint of likely success bassed on achievements to date!

There is no doubt in my mind, however, that such "improvements" would simply accelerate the existing socially disruptive desocialization in the short term. In the medium term we would look forward to the same levels of alcoholism, petrol sniffing, vandalism and violence which characterize life in settlements in Queensland and other places. In the longer term the border regions of the three states would follow those to the East, where almost all vestiges of indigenous culture have been obliterated from the Aboriginal lifestyle.

Authentic visible adult training is the only credible engine for

- the people to realize their ambitions to control their own community affairs; and
- for schooling to contribute positively to the normal socialization of their children for mature and productive adulthood.

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Chapter 16

TRANBY COLLEGE

by Gavan Flick

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Tranby has always played an important role in the Aboriginal struggle and taken strong and active position on issues such as Land Rights and Aboriginal control. The Administrator/General Secretary, (Kevin Cook) the Director of Studies (Allan Lui) and six of the nine full-time teaching staff are Aboriginal. Tranby also has an all Aboriginal Board of Studies whose aim is to determine the educational direction of the college and carry out regular community consultants. Because Tranby is Aboriginal run and independent, it has been able to follow its own directions in developing modes of education, that will suit different Aboriginal communities. Courses at Tranby have come from what Aboriginal people have wanted, not governments. They are drawn up by talking to Aboriginal groups, not designed and imposed from the outside. Because Tranby has aimed to meet community need first, it has pioneered courses that have later been taken up by other institutions (e.g. The first tertiary preparation course in 1983 and the first site curators course in 1984/5). Tranby offers components in Aboriginal Studies in all its courses and our experience has been that this has often been crucial for the confidence and personal development of students in other areas of their courses. Aboriginal studies include an understanding of the different ways Aboriginal people live and their responses to colonialism at a personal and political level. Since adult learners have different skills and experiences, Tranby designs all its courses to allow for the individuals needs and interests, through using electives, small groups and one-to-one tuition.

HISTORY

Tranby College has been a pioneer in Aboriginal adult education at the post secondary level. The College was started in 1958 by Alf Clint, an Anglican priest, who worked with Aboriginal communities to set up co-operatives, including a fishing co-operative at Lockhart River in North Queensland and a bakery at Yarrabah. Later Tranby's activities changed to training Aboriginal and T.S.I. people in running co-operatives. Students have come from all over Australia and many people in Aboriginal affairs today were once students at Tranby. Despite its important role, it was not until 1982 and after a long struggle that Tranby began to receive government funds to develop its courses and take on more students. This year (1988) there are around 85 students in three main courses. Throughout its history, Tranby has been supported by Aboriginal groups, trade unions, church groups and individuals. Tranby has been forced to close down for periods in the past due to lack of funds. Tranby Aboriginal College is part of the Co-operative for Aborigines Limited.

GAVAN FLICK, Tranby Aboriginal College, 13 Mansfield Street, Glebe N.S.W. 2037

Chapter 17

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT THE CROSS ROADS REPRODUCING THE PRESENT OR CHOOSING THE FUTURE?

by Ralph Folds and Djuwalpi Marika

Over the years comparisons have been drawn between the impoverished people of Asia, Africa and South America, the so called Third World, and Aboriginal communities and it has been claimed by some that Aborigines live in Third World conditions and share Third World health problems. Those claims have been strongly rebutted by others who point out that Aborigines are not nearly so badly off, they get welfare and various benefits unheard of in the Third World. These people usually add that some Aborigines even have land rights.

It is true that few Aborigines have to resort to begging for daily food as is often the case in Third World countries where the traveller is sometimes beseiged by hungry people. Nevertheless, some remote Aboriginal communities and it is important not to generalise, do share a fundamental Third World characteristic. They are afflicted by a Third World problem called dual development and as a consequence they are equally powerless and dispirited and ultimately share much of the poverty of the Third World.

This paper is about the problem of dual development in Aboriginal communities and the role adult education and training could play in solving it. In writing this paper we are drawing on experience in researching social change and living and working in Third World villages and remote Aboriginal communities.

WHAT IS DUAL DEVELOPMENT?

In the Third World dual development is characterised by a modern building, a skyscraper, next to which families live in a rubbish dump. Dual development is the new Mercedes car speeding down an unmade dusty road past villagers dressed in rags. It is people watching development take place around them but having no stake in it, people seeing development change their lives while they are powerless to control or influence the changes which affect them and their children.

Dual development in the Aboriginal context refers to development which community people are not part of. There is development on one side and Aboriginal community people on the other. The developed side is the small businesses, including many community enterprises, that run on community money from lots of Aboriginal customers, often with hard working people from outside the community making sure they are running efficiently. It is the community housing corporations that may employ a few Aboriginal people but are not under community control. The developed side also includes modern schools with hard working, well meaning teachers but without

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RALPH FOLDS, Batchelor College, N.T. 5791
DJUWALPI MARIKA, Nungalinya College, Darwin, N.T. 0800

a community feeling of ownership. This is the modern side, which in 1988 is still outside community hands. Of course community people take from Western society what they need, cars, video, telephone but the development structure is not under their control.

Dual development is tremendously dispiriting for Aboriginal communities, symbolising as it does the power relationships within Australian society. It creates feelings of impotence since there is no control over change and in a very real sense Aboriginal people on the undeveloped side become second class citizens in their own communities. Ultimately, control comes down to the opportunity for Aboriginal people to make choices about their future and their children's future.

In many communities there are no choices to be made because no real control exists. Most Aboriginal people do not at present have the power to make choices about their own future, they can only watch it unfold. As in the Third World their future is mostly in the hands of the other people.

Dual development creates enormous social problems in the Third World and will increasingly do so in Australia. In particular it feeds a generation gap between parents and their children where older people have strong links to communities but declining authority. Their children are attracted to the developed side and the material benefits it provides but are rarely able to share in those benefits.

It is the same in the Third World where the generation gap and the lack of job opportunities in rural communities leads to a flow of young people away from the countryside to the cities. Unfortunately the cities offer no solutions and in the Third World people moving from the villages usually end up living in ghettos and shanty towns in conditions of great poverty. The same trend is evident in Australia and will almost certainly accelerate in the future. It is quite likely that more of the present generation of young people in remote communities will leave their communities and come to the cities and towns, not just as temporary visitors as they do now, but on a more or less permanent basis. As in the Third World the opportunities for these young people, who lack literacy, numeracy and other work skills, are likely to be very limited. Some will end up living in conditions not much better than those of the urban slums in the Third World.

The movement of people to the cities represents another symptom of the breakdown of Aboriginal communities, the further disintegration of communities as places where there is a sense of oneness and unity between the people who live there. This is a symptom of dual development and it represents perhaps the greatest challenge to adult education and training.

EXPLAINING DUAL DEVELOPMENT

In a quite normal remote community with a developed side an Aboriginal community side, and an enormous gulf between, there have been many self management training programs aimed at bridging these sides. Some of these training programs have led nowhere at all, to jobs which do not and will probably never exist in remote communities. But others have aimed to train community people for jobs on the developed side, in the modern school, in businesses like the store and to help out the hard working policemen.

Those who deliver this training always seem disappointed and surprised when their well intentioned programs fail to capture the enthusiasm of Aborigines, and when, even after the appearance of success, some of their graduates do not perform as expected. There is an apparent lack of commitment, complaints that Aboriginal store workers lack a sense of responsibility, teachers are not in their classrooms on time. What is wrong? Where are the Aboriginal people who are eager to get training and take over these jobs and then prove they can do just as good a job as the people they replaced?

There are several current theories about why some remote Aboriginal people are less than happy about joining the developed side in their communities and they are essentially cultural explanations, explaining Aboriginal disinterest in terms of cultural differences. One of these theories has it that remote Aboriginal people are different from white people in that they do not learn in a purposeful way, they think learning is a kind of ritual which does not involve applying themselves to study. In other words it is argued that because of cultural differences Aboriginal people do not understand what is required of them to join the develolped side. It is the same in Third World countries. In rural Java the people on the developed side also say it is the culture of the people on the undeveloped side that gets in the way of modernisation, but they are less euphemistic when talking about this, the villagers are described as too primitive in their thinking. These theories always come from the developed side and they always see the culture of the undeveloped side as a problem.

We would argue that Aboriginal poeple generally understand very well what is required of them and what development is all about but unlike those on the developed side they also understand the costs and have good reasons to hold back. It is people on the developed side who do not understand those reasons which have absolutely nothing to do with purposeful learning, but a lot to do with the power relationships in remote communities, the ownership and control of development and the way it is put in place.

THE CONDITIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Some communities have avoided the problem of dual development and in doing so they furnish principles for education and training to follow in other communities. We are referring to independent minded WA communities like Punmu which is situated some 850 km east of Port Hedland, between the Great Sandy and Gibson deserts in Western Australia. Punmu is a community of about 250 people, mostly Manjiljarra, who were originally part of the Strelley Mob but broke away to build their own community and independent school. These people experienced the effects of dual development, with loss of culture and language and control over their own lives and they moved further into the desert and responded to the problem in the following way:

- They did not let development undermine their traditional leadership.
- They took what they needed from white culture and society and excluded what they did not want, they did not allow development they felt no control over, including such western cultural baggage as alcohol and violent videos. They put community needs above institutional ones, where they accepted white institutions they reshaped them to make them their own — they made them Aboriginal. In

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the case of school they radically changed it, incorporated it into daily life and overturned the dominance of English in the primary school. They made sure the community itself filtered and defined school knowledge. They refused to leave development to experts and did not accept any outside view of what they should do. The Punmu people are not sitting back and watching development take place, they are controlling it, they are not being developed, they are not the object of development but they are the initiators of it, they are doing it themselves, it is not something happening to them.

This is not to say that everything that happens at Punmu should happen elsewhere, other communities may make entirely different decisions about the directions they take. But Punmu provides two important lessons:

(1) Aboriginal people are capable of working in a purposeful way in building their own future. There is no problem with purposeful learning at Punmu, everything they do is for the community and to make the community strong.

(2) Aboriginal communities will embrace development when they have a sense of control over it, when they own it. Unless Aboriginal people bring development to their side rather than having to move across to the developed side few will participate in it. Aboriginal people need to make the developed side their own side.

These same principles must be applied to adult education and training, which must work towards providing community control. Without this choices are only individual ones, a means to personal advancement rather than part of a process of community development and they will offer no advantages for community people. To achieve anything beyond transient success all training must become integral to an Aboriginal vision of community control. What is needed is for each community to construct its own framework of self management, into which its educational and training programs can be built.

This means that education and training must look further than taking over jobs in community institutions and enterprises; it must help communities take control of those institutions and enterprises and turn them into tools for community development.

DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are two clear directions: education and training can attempt to reproduce the present development power structure in communities or it can incorporate an Aboriginal vision of change. It can reproduce the present or it can open choices for the future.

Education and training which aims merely to draft Aborigines into the developed side will reproduce the present power sturcture and it will fail as it has always failed. As the Miller Report makes clear many remote Aborigines want jobs but not mainstream jobs. Apart from obligations which preclude them from regular work they will never be comfortable working within a power structure in which they feel no ownership, and people from outside the community will always be needed to prop the system up and keep it going, as has been happening over the past decades.

Education and training aimed at moving community people into the developed side has not solved problems in the Third World. Where it has worked at all it has created elites which have torn communities apart as a few local people joined the developed side and quickly alienated themselves from the rest. Dual development is not necessarily based on racial differences — it is any development, whether Aboriginal or white, which has limited community support.

REPRODUCING THE PRESENT

What sort of education reproduces existing dual development? Education that reproduces the present structure assumes that there are the same jobs in every community, in council, community enterprises etc and training is simply a matter of providing skills for those jobs. This education is not a two-way process but a one-way process where the developed side teaches and the community side learns, when the developed side speaks and the community side listens. In this education the community has to prove it is just as good as the developed side so the focus is on one thing, getting Aborigines to the same educational standards as whites, and this is said to be equality.

This kind of education is part of dual development, it embodies the ideology of dual development in that it sees development as coming from the developed side to the underdeveloped side. In the Third World this is also called 'top down' development because knowledge is seen as flowing from those who have all the knowledge to those who are essentially passive recipients of it. In practice, these recipients become the victims of development.

Top down education aims to move Aboriginal people into mainstream jobs and it may succeed in putting a few black faces in schools or community councils. But it is also about protecting the structure while changing the race of the people working within it. Therein lies the problem for Aboriginal people. They are offered education and training which captures them within the present framework and they resist it. Unless we make it clear through the education and training we offer that we are doing more than this we will never address the dual development problem, nor will we harness the enthusiasm of Aboriginal people.

The second direction, the one that offers the only chance to give Aboriginal communities real choices about their future, depends on empowering Aboriginal people to see and act on alternatives in building their own communities. This kind of education aims to do more than produce black people who can think like whites, it aims to produce black people who can turn whitefella institutions like school, council, store, cattle and arts and crafts enterprises etc into tools communities can own, control and use. It empowers Aboriginal people to rebuild from the bottom up by developing enterprises which meet local needs in terms of making communities more independent and creating jobs which are culturally appropriate.

CHOOSING THE FUTURE

What are the characteristics of an education that can facilitate Aboriginal ownership of development thereby providing choices for the future?

This education creates a community development framework where Aboriginal people have executive control and it works within that framework in responding to community educational needs. It does not start with assumptions about what communities want, nor does it simply train for a job outside a particular community

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context which is the surest way of locking people into work practices communities may want to change.

This education does not treat Aborigines as empty vessels to be filled by experts who know all about community jobs but nothing about the jobs communities may want them to do in the future. This is a two way education, not a top down one, and it treats Aborigines as equal partners in a common research effort aimed at building a community development framework which starts in communities with community aspirations, not institutional or individual ones.

In this two way education it is useful to have a cycle of work experience and study intensives. Part of work experience involves Aboriginal students in discovering what their communities want and how those needs can be met; working from their own experience they focus on obstacles to community aspirations. During study intensives they define these problems and seek solutions that can be built at the local level. They exchange ideas with Aborigines from other communities, representatives and policy makers of government departments and community development and educational experts who are used as consultants in this cooperative exchange of knowledge.

In this way students learn skills in critical thinking which they can apply to analyse the current circumstances of their community and its particular development needs. The leaders of Punmu are like this; they may not have literacy and numeracy skills but they are critical thinkers and they are also political thinkers.

Providing this education helps communities to establish a developmental framework which will encompass further training. Within such a framework the training of teachers, council workers and people working in community businesses does not just take in what these jobs do now, but what communities want these jobs to do. The focus is understanding the role of community institutions and enterprises as these have been and can be in the future; how they can be shaped and re-engineered to meet community aspirations. Trainee teachers find out what their community wants taught in school, and then develop an appropriate curriculum. Workers in community enterprises learn how to work in a business which they have helped build or re-engineered to fit the cultural, economic and other directions of their community.

This education and training is a practical means to achieving a community's aspirations in running its own affairs and establishing an economic base for the future. Most importantly it is part of building up from the bottom to make the developed side the community side. That is the role education and training must have if Aboriginal communities are ever going to have real choices to make about their future.

Chapter 18

A CASE FOR A NATIONAL ABORIGINAL NETWORK ABOUT ENCLAVES

by Eric Hayward

My first experience with Aboriginal programmes in post secondary institutions goes back to 1973.

At that time there weren't any programmes appropriate to my needs in Western Australia and I would suggest that there would have been few programmes suitable throughout Australia for people in my position.

The course I did was the Aboriginal Task Force programme at the South Australian Institute of Technology. I was part of that first intake and was accompanied by two other West Australians.

This was my first introduction to an Aboriginal Education Enclave.

On completion of that two year programme, where we acquired a Certificate in Community Development, we returned to WA to find that some of our local institutions were beginning to put together programmes for Aboriginal people.

The institutions I recollect were: WAIT (now Curtin University), Mt Lawley Teachers College (now WACAE) and Adult Aboriginal Education (now TAFE Aboriginal Access).

At various stages I had input to all of these programmes; some as on the advisory committees, others as a counsellor, in the TAFE Aboriginal Access programme as a lecturer and later responsibility as part of Head Office administration.

My current position is Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Studies at Hedland College. I am responsible for the management of the programme which constitutes Admission Studies, Welfare Studies, delivery of community based programmes and an enclave system.

I teach, I advise non Aboriginal College staff regarding all aspects of programme delivery, I liaise with the East Pilbara Aboriginal communities, I organise programmes, promote the College and manage the areas already mentioned, as well as doing other things.

In my talk so far I have spoken about Enclaves; a little of the history and something about my role as a programme manager in an enclave.

For the sake of this talk I refer to the title "Aboriginal Enclave" as that meaning:

> "any Aboriginal programme that is part of any post secondary institution, be it a university; a college of advanced education; a TAFE institution or an independent College. The programmes are usually appendages and vary in ways such as: bridging or mainstream, in size, management structure and access to institution decision making. Some of these programmes are called Aboriginal enclave, Aboriginal studies, Aboriginal Units and perhaps, the Access Programmes."

ERIC HAYWARD, Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Studies, Hedland College, W.A. 6722

The purpose of my talk is to highlight the need for: greater co ordination of enclaves and a network where Aboriginal managers, lecturers and support staff can compare, contrast and provide solutions regarding enclave issues.

"For the sake of self determination, Aboriginal people must play the major role in their own education."

I will now address a number of issues which have been concerns to me regarding the development of the "Enclave".

The enclave is a recent concept and many institutions are still proposing to put them together. Two examples in WA are; the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University. In the past institutions have gone ahead without adequate Aboriginal input and preparation consequently very few are similar.

The inference is of course consistency. Aboriginal control and greater reference to other programmes will increase effectiveness and ensure worthy student outcomes.

SOME OF MY CONCERNS ARE

Funding

There continues to be the mentality in institutions that funding for Aboriginal programmes is a bottomless pit. Institutions expect that programme managers can acquire heaps of funding just by whacking in a submission.

"This of course is not true."

The result of this mentality is that the enclave is expected to acquire funding from outside. In many cases there is a reluctance to incorporate funding of the enclave in ordinary funding contingencies. (What we might call state funding).

"Do strategies exist to overcome this problem?"

Aboriginal Control

We as Aboriginal people aspire to control our own lives and to shape our destinies.

Aboriginalisation is the policy to identify positions as Aboriginal positions in organisations, i.e. Enclaves.

Aboriginalisation is a contentious issue. Some work has been done by Aboriginal people in preparing such papers and attempts have been made to implement the policy.

Many obstacles still remain. The facts are that in many cases non Aboriginals refuse to step aside, not allowing such policy to work.

"We know that as Aboriginal people; being a model, knowing what our aspirations are, and having an awareness of Aboriginal culture, are high on our criteria in setting up success."

How do we convince non Aboriginal people, that a more appropriate strategy is required with Aboriginals playing major roles.

Community Expectations

The need for enclave staff to be seen as part of the Aboriginal community is obvious. Advice from and liaison with the people, is essential to gaining acceptance from the community. Without acceptance people tend not to participate.

Opportunity to spend adequate time and resources in liaising with the Aboriginal community is usually difficult to acquire.

The need is often overlooked by non Aboriginals.

Advisory Committees

There is much inconsistency in Aboriginal advisory committees. Terms of Reference vary considerably. Some advise the enclave whilst others have a direct influence on college councils as the DIT and influence upper management levels. Perhaps to acquire more satisfactory Aboriginal input to institutions and programmes, a greater awareness of committee guidelines and objectives will help.

Awareness of other Programmes

Many enclaves operate within their own regions with little knowlege of the sorts of programmes being conducted elsewhere.

"More ideas, I guess, lead to better programmes."

This doesn't mean enclaves will not design their own special programmes, it means more appropriate ideas lead to better courses.

Institutional Support

Obviously the enclave needs the support of the Institution.

Do institutions know how to support enclaves in an effective way?

Do Enclaves get this support? If not, how do they go about getting it?

Examples of past success will no doubt be a help to many here.

I suggest standardising enclaves must lead to greater effectiveness

WHAT I'VE TRIED TO DO TODAY IS:

1. Express my concerns about some problems that need to be addressed about "Enclaves".
2. Suggest that there are ways to improve enclaves.
3. Recommmend the establishment of some sort of National Enclave Network.

During the course of this conference, the organisers may provide opportunity for those associated with enclaves, to discuss whether there is a need for such a network.

After all, the Enclave has had a major effect already educationally on our lives.

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Chapter 19

ABORIGINAL RANGER TRAINING, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND OUTCOMES

by Peter McGlew

Introduction

Aboriginal ranger training (ART) generally provides opportunities for Aboriginal people to train and consequently gain employment as land managers in their traditional country. There are also cases where Aboriginal people train and work as land managers beyond the boundaries of their own country.

The two employment areas that ART caters for are:

1. **National Park Rangers** — in which case the Aboriginal rangers are employed by the nature conservation authority responsible for that area, as national park rangers.
2. **Community Rangers** — where a nature conservation authority may assist with the training of the rangers, but does not employ them on completion of the training programme. It is usually the community's responsibility to employ these people and their role is to assist in the management of land for which the community is responsible.

This paper is about ART for national parks although much of what is said can be applied to community ranger programmes.

HISTORY

There have been a number of ART programmes throughout Australia in the last 9 years; I will give a brief run down on when and where some of these have occurred and by whom they were conducted.

The first programme was at Kakadu National Park in 1979. This was a 12 month programme run by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS). They have subsequently run several more 12 month ATR programmes at Kakadu.

The ANPWS also began ART at Uluru in 1986. Other programmes in the Northern Territory have been those conducted by the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory (CCNT) such as the programme at Gurig National Park in 1982.

In other states there have been ART programmes jointly conducted by the ANPWS and state conservation authorities, e.g.

1. With the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (SANPWS) at Gammon Ranges National Park in 1983 and Coorong National Park in 1986/87
   and
2. With the West Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (WADCALM) at Millstream Chichester Range National Park in 1986.

WADCALM is currently conducting its own programme at Bungle Bungle National Park in the Kimberley region of the state.

PETER McGLEW, P.O. Box 942, Kununurra W.A. 6743

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife service and the Victorian Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands have also provided training opportunities for Aboriginal people to become National Park Rangers.

Queensland is currently developing a land management course which will be conducted by TAFE.

PHILOSOPHIES

There are a number of philosophies fundamental to any ART programme. The following are not presented in order of importance:

1. Aboriginal employment — the programmes should increase the number of Aboriginal people employed.
2. Desire of Aboriginal people to look after their own country — Aborigines traditionally looked after their own country and they still wish to do so. In many cases they have traditional obligations to do just this though in the last 200 years it has been extremely difficult.
3. Recognition of Aboriginal land management practices — in recent years it has become increasingly evident that many elements in the Australian environment depend upon Aboriginal land management practices to survive.
4. Recognition that Aboriginal knowledge, skills and practices are a valid qualification for employment in the nature conservation field, distinct from, but not inferior to formal educational qualifications.
5. Planning of ART programmes to involve both the appropriate consideration authority and Aboriginal community — lengthy negotiations should take place to ensure that both parties' aims, objectives and expectations are catered for.
6. Two way training — the training programme, besides teaching Aboriginal trainees about Western land management, must allow for the trainees and other members of their community to teach the training officer and other conservation officers about traditional Aboriginal culture and land management practices. In many cases, the trainees themselves still need considerable instruction from the more knowledgeable people in the community. The programme needs to allow time to cater for this.
7. Accountability — the ART programme needs to be, in some way, accountable to the relevant Aboriginal community so that they can maintain a degree of control over the programme.
8. Cross cultural awareness — Aboriginal rangers and Aboriginal participation in the management of national parks offers a prime opportunity to educate park visitors about aboriginal culture and assist in breaking down the prejudices that exist in this country.

OUTCOMES

I will look at the outcomes of ART under a series of headings. Several are closely related.

Aboriginal Rangers

As a result of ART there are a number of Aboriginal people employed as National Park rangers throughout Australia. This can be seen as a success, but is it enough?

Land Managers or Park Workers

On completion of their training the trainees enter the mainstream workforce on a base level, such as, Grade 1 ranger. while gaining employment this level does not allow for a great deal of participation in management decision. Over time, and with promotion, rangers can increase their role in the land management decision making. This, however, leaves a gap where Aboriginal people are not participating to the level that they wish.

Aboriginal Community Participation in Management

To gain a satisfactory level of involvement in the management of a National Park, the Aboriginal community traditionally affiliated with that area needs some sort of mechanism, other than Aboriginal rangers, to ensure that they achieve this. An example of this is the Uluru National Park board of management where the traditional owners have a majority of members. Management decisions, excepting many of the mundane, day to day decisions, cannot go ahead without their approval. This sort of mechanism means that the community is adequately represented at a management level, and at the same time, relieves the Aboriginal rangers of a great deal of responsibility that is not appropriate to their initial years of employment.

Traditional Western Park/Conservation Values

With the advent of Aboriginal involvement in national Parks, there has been a conflict of philosophies. An obvious example is the hunting and gathering of traditional foods by Aboriginal people in National Parks. This goes against the grain of Western conservation values where such activities have been, in the past, outlawed from such areas. Negotiation is required to solve this conflict where both parties need to adjust their previous concepts about how best to manage the area in question.

Cross Cultural Awareness for Park Staff

In past programmes prejudices held by non Aboriginal park staff have hindered ART. If these programmes are going to succeed and for a continuing good work relationship between an Aboriginal community and conservation authority, cross cultural awareness programmes involving both parties are essential. Many of the problems associated with ART are related to misunderstanding between the respective cultural groups. Learning about each others' culture can help prevent this misunderstanding.

Planning Time

The planning of any ART programme is understandably a crucial factor for the success of such programmes. Unfortunately this aspect is often neglected.

The conservation authority and the Aboriginal community need to conduct lengthy negotiations, including visits to existing programmes, to detail their expectations of the programme being developed. This should include how the programme is going to operate and how it is going to be evaluated. Clear aims, objectives and guidelines set before the programme begins will assist greatly in preventing problems arising further down the road.

Within this planning period infrastructure and resource requirements should be determined and acquired before commencement of the programme. This has not always been done in the past and has placed great strain on the programmes in these situations.

CONCLUSION

Aboriginal Ranger Training is a positive step towards Aboriginal employment as well as allowing Aboriginal people to participate in the management of their traditional lands. There are still many hurdles to overcome. However I think ART is generally pointed in the right direction.

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Chapter 20

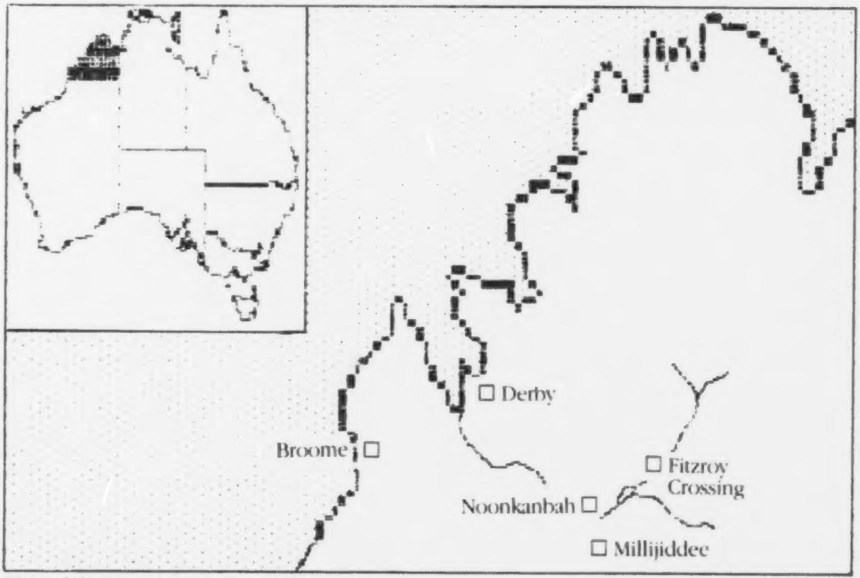
LIVING A NEW WAY

A case study in community self management by Anthony McMahon and Anne Kogolo

"We don't want to go backwards . . . We want to live a new way" — Yungngora and Kadjina communities to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, 14 August 1975

Introduction

This paper traces the development of self-management in the Yungngora and Kadjina Communities on Noonkanmbah and Millijiddee stations near Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.



Map of the West Kimberley, Western Australia

It is a truism in Aboriginal Affairs that Aboriginal people should be able to gain the skills needed to manage their own communities and enterprises. Usually, however, self-management is portrayed in narrow bureaucratic terms, such as 'the executive, management and administrative skills needed to efficiently run the communities' (Miller 1985, p.241). These two communities have a wider idea of self-management than this. Their definition of self-management encompasses 'advancement to autonomy'. They have come to this view from an understanding of their own historical experience and an appreciation of what they want for themselves.

TONY MCMAHON, 94 Bungaree Rd, Wilson W.A. 6107
ANNE KOGOLO, Noonkanbah Station, P.O. Box 3, Fitzroy Crossing W.A. 6765

THE COMMUNITIES

Noonkanbah and Millijiddee stations straddle the Fitzroy River about 90 km south-east of the town of Fitzroy Crossing (see map). The two communities are made up of Aboriginal people whose traditional lands lie on Noonkanbah and Millijiddee stations and on the desert fringe to the south of Millijiddee.

The indigenous people of this section of the Fitzroy River, the Nyigina, were brutally subdued in the 1890s (Bolton and Pedersen 1980). They were incorporated into a system of slave labour common to cattle and sheep stations in the Kimberley and the Northern Territory (McGrath 1987). Aboriginal people from south of the river, the Walmajarri, while not totally divested of their lands because they were unsuitable for cattle-raising, were held captive on these and other nearby stations for generations.

From 1889 the Nyigina and the Walmajarri helped create a viable pastoral industry on Noonkanbah and Millijiddee stations. They did this while living in appalling, even brutalising, conditions. The ease with which they learned to work sheep and cattle, the inability of management to recruit and keep white workers, the total control given by law and custom to management over Aboriginal people and the fact that management gave 'keep' and not wages, ensured that Aboriginal people were valued, in the abstract, as a necessary resource for the pastoral industry.

Station management, which was based on violence and the threat of violence, enforced the economic dependence and social control of the Aboriginal people. In a letter written to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in February 1974 Noonkanbah and Millijiddee people showed they were well aware of the meaning of their history:

> In early days our people were like slaves and
> were working harder because it was easier for the
> white man to make money quicker and faster. Now
> there are big cattle stations around Fitzroy Crossing
> and lots of our boys know how to handle stock work
> better than any other white man (Department for Community
> Services Fitzroy Crossing, file 8.1)

During the 1950s and 1960s living and work conditions had become so bad on Noonkanbah that most members had left the station to find work elsewhere. Finally, in August 1971, there was a 'walk off' of the remaining workers after another dispute with the manager and the group moved to a fringe-dwelling existence in Fitzroy Crossing, 100 kms away.

THE NOONKANBAH/MILLIJIDDEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The life of fringe-dwellers in Fitzroy Crossing had a devastating effect on the people. Condemned to live in unhealthy and demoralising conditions on other Aboriginal peoples' country, the groups began to disintegrate. Mindful of this the Noonkanbah leaders, joined by Walmajarri leaders from Cherrubun station east of Millijiddee, lobbied for all or part of Noonkanbah station as a place for the groups to be repatriated.

Just as importantly, they began a process of community organisation that differed radically from the station management they had rebelled against. The people wanted autonomy i.e. to be their own boss and to this end they set up a number of work committees that planned and carried out programmes the communities had agreed on. They were assisted in this by Department for Community Services (DCS) staff in Fitzroy Crossing.

> . . . the community arranged itself into work groups to provide camp maintenance and possible economic self-help projects. All adult men and some of the women were assigned tasks under the following categories:
>
> Bush nurses; Schooling — Pre-School and Walmatjari; Store and Banking; Sheep and Pigs; Market Gardening; Artifacts and Hunting; Building, Water Supply and Bricks; and Welding and Transport. A leader was appointed to each group and they were to report at a proposed weekly Monday morning meeting (DCS file A4090 v1 p.93).

It is true that, in some ways, these were a continuance of station work patterns but the difference is in the phrase 'the community arranged itself'. The traditional authority of the community sanctioned the old station patterns and made them over for the community's new purpose.

These new management arrangements continued when, in September 1976, the communities returned to Noonkanbah and Millijiddee stations as managers themselves. Such a change of management structure from the old boss/worker relationship was not without opposition. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which had funded the purchase of the stations, insisted that a white manager be appointed to run the properties. The communities vehemently resisted this, saying what was the point of having a station if they still had a white boss. In the end the communities won their battle and took up the stations on their own terms. Over the following years the two communities have established and managed, in addition to the stations, three community schools and three stores as well as a number of other ventures. It would be untrue to say that these have not had their ups and downs. They have, and no doubt they will continue to have them.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

The underlying foundation of Yungngora's and Kadjina's concept of self-management was their commitment to increase the opportunity and ability of their people to make decisions about their own lives. This is a view they have re-iterated time and again. Yet their commitment to self-management was not something merely negative, a wish to be free of interference. It was that, certainly, but they also wanted to be free to do something. In essence, while they wanted their stations/communities managed, *they* wanted to do it.

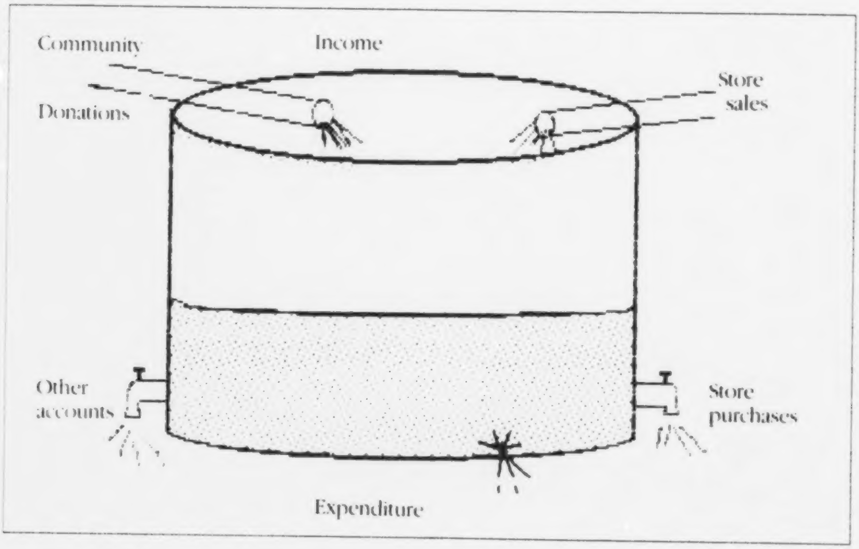
The communities' idea of self-management involved two things: a) all groups in the community must be involved and b) use must be made of skilled outsiders who have expertise not available to community members. Self-management, then was not just about finance and economic matters. It was/is a way of living as a community. Virtually everyone had some sort of job, be it stockman, cook, store-worker, camp nurse, teacher etc. There were meetings for the various groups and, when needed, a community meeting to make policies or resolve problems.

MEETINGS

There has been a great deal of criticism, much of it justified, about meetings in Aboriginal communities. Meetings that only rubber-stamp a public servant's decision or spend time grumbling about things that are bad, just reproduce the master slave relationship of the past. In a community trying to become autonomous the members of the community must have the actual power to effect decisions. With Yungngora and Kadjina this meant taking time to make decisions, in their own way, with assistance if necessary to understand the issues. Whites were often excluded from this decision making and rightly so. This exclusion usually happened in one of three ways: by splitting a meeting into two parts by having a lunch break, for example. This allowed the people to come to their own decision in an informal situation while relaxing. Another way of excluding whites was to ask them to leave the meeting by saying it was Aboriginal business. A third way was for the community to have their meetings without telling the white people involved. Decisions like this not only reinforced the perception of community autonomy but helped create it. They are in marked contrast to the decision making practices in dependent Aboriginal communities (Bern 1977; Thiele 1982, p.16).

SKILLED OUTSIDERS

The use, but control of skilled outsiders, usually whites, was another feature of Yungngora and Kadjina's autonomy. A number of white people have been essential for the development of the two communities and are valued for that. The DCS community development workers who worked with the communities from 1975-1985 deliberately reinforced the communities' determination to be self-managing. Their style of working ensured that the communities' wish to be autonomous was respected. For example monthly financial statements, part of the flow of information that enables



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people to exercise control over their lives, were couched in images and language that people could readily understand. People brought up on cattle stations are familiar with water tanks and bores. A readily understood image, therefore, was the water tank which was used to show financial matters pictorially.

In the diagram, the water coming into the tank at the top is income and the water coming from the taps is expenditure. The crack in the side of the tank represents wasteful expenditure. Diagrams such as this helped community members who were illiterate to understand and control community finances far better than the recital of a list of figures or the sight of a balance sheet. The communities could see their progress and make informed decisions about their future.

Unfortunately, not all agencies or their staff supported community autonomy. This caused tension and disruption in the communities. The most celebrated case was the State Government's insistence that drilling take place in a sacred area but a supposedly simple issue such as housing could show that the concept of self-management for Aboriginal communities was not something that just happened but something that had to be fought for, even against those who openly espoused it.

In 1980 the State Government had offered to build houses for the Yungngora community at Noonkanbah. This was accepted but because of previous experience with builders who brought alcohol into the community against the community's wishes, the way other communities had been given inappropriate housing and the likely interference to their community life, the community told the relevant state government department that it wanted to control the location and design of the houses and that alcohol was banned from the community. Yungngora *were* eventually able to control the provision of housing in the community and limit alcohol because they were strong and well organised. For them, self-management involved the total concept of what housing would bring to the community and the way it would come to the community.

TRAINING

The Miller Report notes that the development of training mechanisms to enable self-management is 'an area of considerable neglect' (Miller 1985, p.241). Yungngora and Kadjina have demonstrated that self-management is not something that is given but something that is taken. Mao Tse-tung's proverb that, 'we must teach the masses clearly what we have received from them confusedly' applies to those who worked with Yungngora and Kadjina. Self-management is something that is done, not just talked about. The best training was to practise what was preached.

From the experience of the Yungngora and Kadjina communities it is possible to list a number of factors that assisted them to advance towards autonomy and which may assist other Aboriginal communities.

(1) Self-management is not just about finances. It involves the whole community and each section of the community in the social and economic development of the community. The people must set the goals for what they want, both long-term and short-term.

(2) There needs to be some sort of structure such as a series of committees to ensure that everyone has a chance to take part in community business according to their capacity.

(3) The 'outsider' whether white or black, employed by the community or visiting on business, must stand back and let people make their own decisions. He/she must back them up even when he/she thinks it is a wrong decision. This doesn't mean the 'outsider' has to act like a wimp. He/she should have his/her say but it should ultimately be the community's own decision.

(4) The 'outsider' who is working with a community needs to develop an ideology compatible with the community's aspirations for autonomy (Creed and Tomlinson 1982). This may mean resisting attempts by his/her employing agency to become tools of that agency to the detriment of Aboriginal people (Tomlinson 1985, p.162).

(5) A community must see its progress, to convince itself it is on the right track. Evaluation is an essential part of self-management whether things are going badly or well.

CONCLUSION

Yungngora and Kadjina communities have developed a process of self-management that means real decision-making control in their communities. It developed initially from the peoples' experience of oppression in station life and is essentially a wish to become autonomous.

On the other hand they value the use of skilled outsiders so long as the outsiders respect and work within the communities' aspirations to become autonomous.

Real self-management, 'advancement to autonomy' is a delicate thing. In these communities, it depends for its growth on the communities' ability to control the decision-making process and on the outsiders' duty and commitment to communicate technical information for that process. Anything else is going backwards. Yungngora and Kadjina want to continue on their new way.

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Chapter 21

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION — POLICIES AND PRACTICES

by Lynette Riley-Mundine

In the last 20 years Australia, as a nation, has worked towards establishing itself as a multicultural society. Uri Themal (1983:69) states that the Australian Government accepts as a basic premise that it,

> "is committed to the preservation and development of a culturally diversified but socially cohesive Australian society, *free of racial tensions* and *offering security, well being* and *equality of opportunity* to all those living here".

The prime aim is to recognise, acknowledge and act on the differing rights and wishes of groups within Australia. So that in the words of UNESCO,

> "the goal is to create a society in which people are given the opportunity, as individuals or groups, to preserve and develop their culture." (ibid)

But is this what is actually being achieved in Australia today? One area for creating equality of opportunity, through which other goals of equality are to be achieved (such as well being, security and freedom of racial tension), is said to be education. Education of all people, at all levels. The Australian Government's aims as well as UNESCO's goals are clearly reflected in the NAEC's — Aims, Rationale and Objectives: Thus **Aim 4** states that "Education for all Australian's must be a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding through an intensive community education programme. It should aim to develop understanding, tolerance and respect for the differing cultural viewpoints held by the peoples of Australia. In doing so the uniqueness of the indigenous people must not become a lost entity within a multicultural Australia."

But is Australia really a multicultural society; that is, working toward recognition of differing cultural rights, with the involvement and participation of different cultural groups?

I contend that Australia is in reality a monocultural society, "a monocultural society is one in which only one culture and tradition is allowed to develop, and in which any culture/ethnic minorities are totally repressed by a single dominant culture. Few societies, if any, are entirely monocultural, but most have monocultural policies and practices." (J. Sherwood 1984:95)

Examples of these practices are seen in relation to Aboriginal Participation in Higher Education and in the so termed *policies* relating to this participation.

Further it is my belief, that the policy statements relating to Aboriginal Participation in Higher Education (APHE), are an active form of systemic bias against Aborigines enforcing institutional racism. Indeed, I will argue that the policies on Aboriginal

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LYN RILEY-MUNDINE, Aboriginal Research Fellow,
University of New England, Armadale N.S.W. 2351

Education are no more than statements of concern, rather than policies in the truest sense.

To clarify this viewpoint I shall firstly, define what is meant by institutional racism, systemic bias, policy and power. Secondly, I shall **present an analysis**/evaluation of the *'policies'* relating to APHE, outlining their concerns, showing that they are not policies as defined, and what their wider implications really mean.

(A) DEFINING

(1) INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Institutional racism, occurs when the institutions in society, openly or indirectly, systematically disadvantage or discriminate against specific groups of people. It can be manifested in the laws of the country, or it can be expressed through the ways that the systems and institutions in society work. It is also developed from people's attitudes, prejudices, discriminations, and their overt or covert actions toward others.

Consequently, if we accept that the policy of assimilation, for example, denies/robs individuals of their identity and ethnic uniqueness and that such assimilation is legalised within our education system, then we must accept that the education system in this country, is a major institution which is socialising Aborigines and others, into accepting the goals and practices of white Australia (**i.e.** assimilation). It is practising a form of institutional racism.

What I am concerned about in this paper are the covert/indirect actions in Aboriginal Education which maintain institutional racism.

(2) SYSTEMIC BIAS

Systemic bias (see Savitch, 1975) is a developmental process. It occurs when the levels of participation and decision making resource manipulation are defined by controlling groups in order to maintain their power. Such power groups control the states of participation, the prerequisites, what one must achieve before being involved in decision making, and they control the means of achieving those prerequisites. They control the systems of communication, education, skills, financial resources and commitment of trained personnel. In this way dominant groups maintain their power, and in doing so effectively perpetuate less powerful/less knowledgeable groups with a dependency on the system. Such dependency reinforces the power of the controlling group, which in turn helps to perpetual systemic bias. It's like a vicious cycle.

Consequently, if group 'A' is the controlling group, group 'B' should be concerned with raising its awareness of how and when systemic bias is being practised in case it has become so ingrained in the **'controlled'** process that group B fails, to see that it is being controlled.

(3) POLICY

If you take the Australian Oxford Dictionary meaning,

POLICY is: the "Prudent conduct, course of action for government or person."

This is simplifying it. Let's take a step further.

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There are many definitions relating to policy, I have taken the following to best illustrate its meaning:

Cochrane (1980:445), in "A Certain Heritage" (1983:13) by Coombs, et al. states:

> "Policy, unlike a law or regulation, is only considered as policy when it is clear that it can and will be implemented; and policy, unlike politics, is not a struggle for power over specific decisions, but rather what guides decision making for a general class of decisions."

Anderson (1984:2-5), uses a definition by Carl Friendrich (1963:79), which is that policy is:

> "a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose."

Anderson (1984), further goes on to say that policy should focus attention on what is actually being done, not on what is proposed or intended. He gives five points to policy, they are that policy should be:

(i) "Firstly, purposive or goal oriented action, . . . intended to produce certain results" (ibid, p2);

(ii) Secondly, policies consist of courses or patterns of actions by government officials rather than their separate, discrete decisions. . . . A policy includes not only the decision to enact a law on some topic, . . . but also the subsequent decisions relating to its implementation and enforcement (ibid, p3).

(iii) Thirdly, policy involves what governments actually do, not what they intend to do or what they say they are going to do (ibid, p4);

(iv) Fourthly, policy may be either positive or negative in form. It may involve some form of overt government action to deal with a problem on which action was demanded (positive); or it may involve a decision by government officials *not* to take action, to do nothing, on some matter on which government involvement is sought (negative). In other words governments can follow a policy of *laissez faire*, or hands off, either generally or on some aspects of activity. Such in action may have major consequences for a society or some of its groups (ibid, p4);

(v) Lastly, policy, . . . is based on law and is authoritative. . . . (it) has an authoritative, legally coercive quality that the policies of private organisations do not have.

> . . . Authoritativeness is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for effective public policy (ibid, p5)"

So that in simple terms policy has a goal, is action based on what is to be or not to be done, and is authoritative.

(4) POWER

Power is fully involved in and reflective of decisions made and the activity which arises from these goals. Power is also the extent to which persons or groups, use barriers in favour of their bias to create policies, for their own exploitations. That is, some issues can be organised into or out of policies.

Lukes (1974:17), says that 'mobilisation of bias' into power is: "a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures ('rules of the game') that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in preferred positions to defend and promote their vested interests. More often than not, the 'status quo defenders' are a minority or elite group within the population in question. Elitism, however, is neither foreordained nor omnipresent: as opponents of the war in Viet Nam can readily attest, the mobilisation of bias can and frequently does benefit a clear majority".

Lukes (1974) further says that power is highlighted by a number of points; that is:

(i) Power is synonymous with influence and control;

(ii) "who prevails in decision making . . . (is) the best way to determine which individuals and groups have "more" power in social life" (p13);

(iii) all forms of successful control of 'A' over 'B';

(iv) the securing of compliance through coercion i.e: the promise of something to come, or threats of deprivation. Coercion also embraces authority, force and manipulation. This is the most insidious exercise of power (in that it is) to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial (p24);

(v) "Power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision making to relatively *"safe"* issues" (p18);

(vi) the amount of decision or non decision making that is carried out, to actively suppress other interests (overt acts), or to suffocate (covert acts) issues before they can achieve the "decision implementing stage of the policy process" (p19);

(vii) power is concerned with persons groups and "how they exercise it (power) and what effects it has on the political process and other actors within the system" (p21);

(viii) controlling the agenda for raising or excluding issues;

(ix) "control of information, through the mass media and through the process of socialisation". (p23); and

(xi) power is governed by the authority we give to the rights of others, thus "power depends on 'the institutionalization of authority' ". (p28)

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> It is "the people's support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuation of the consent that brought the law into exercise to begin with". (p29).

As can be seen from the above, policy and power are inexplicitly linked. One affects and determines the other.

For Aboriginal people in the education arena then, we are allowed to be, or encouraged into the formation and implementation of policies, but are we? I know we are involved in **policy formation, NOTE**: NAEC guidelines and policy statements, but are these really policies, by the previous outlines of what a policy is? How are we really involved in, or able to control, implementation?

There are many statements to the fact that governments and educational institutions *should* cede give over power, authority, responsibility and accountability to Aborigines, but is this really happening? Does the government really believe that it should give us power, authority, responsibility, and accountability? Does anyone really believe this or is it just words on paper, to get our co-operation, to make us feel involved, and in control.

I believe that these *'policies'* raise false hopes and only create illusions of power and change. That is, we are given promises of control, through these policies, but how much control is given and how effective are these 'policies'? How can we have self mangement, and our own controls if we are structurally, financially and administratively dependent on governments and controlled by their bureaucracies? Are we becoming complacent without illusions of power, or are we actively evaluating and upgrading our past achievements and our future aspirations? Or are we reinforcing a dependency relationship which accentuates our powerlessness and frustrations?

In "A Certain Heritage", edited by Coombs, et al (1984), there is a discussion about how the education system is used to colonise and control Aboriginal people, they state that:

"Altbach and Kelly (ed. 1978:20 21), in a series of essays about the educational problems of minority and Third World peoples say that the domination of a 'nation' (defined geographically, socially, linguistically or culturally), within the borders of a nation state by another group or groups of people, can be best understood as **internal colonialism. Whereas externally colonised people often had numbers eventually to assert themselves or halt exploitation, internally colonised peoples have usually had their cultures usurped and replaced. Among such colonised minorities schooling (education) is completely divorced from the social and cultural realities of people at whom it is directed.**

Other characteristics, which illustrate this divorce from reality in aboriginal Australian today are described in Altbach and Kelly's discussion of colonialism in education (ibid. 1 7):

(i) colonial education was offered by the coloniser without the input or consent of the colonised;

(ii) school was not an organic outgrowth of the society of the colonised. Neither the languages nor the social values were theirs. Where a vernacular was used it was transitional to learning metropolitan languages;

(iii) neither were such schools an integral part of the society and culture of the colonisers: the educational standards were low: similar to those of church charity schools in the nineteenth centry England;

(iv) the age-specific, hierarchical schools, emphasising primary levels, eliminated large segments of the population from the secondary schooling and qualified people to work only in subordinate jobs: providing no preparation for leadership in their own society; and

(v) colonised countries were not free to determine the direction of education and could choose only to reject or accept what the coloniser offered". (p158)

I think that, if we look at each of these points carefully, it is evident that we have in the past been controlled and manipulated, and that it continues to happen today.

(B) REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENTS ON ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A number of "policies" and statements relating directly or indirecltv to Aborigines in Higher Education, have been reviewed evaluated for : firstly, the power behind such statements, so as to turn the concerns into policy declarations, and secondly, to note the areas of concern that they raise.

The "policies" and statements reviewed were:

(i) NATIONAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NAEC)
Policy Statement on Tertiary Education for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. 1986
Australian Government Publishing Service

(ii) NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION (NSWTF)
Aborigines in Higher Education. 1987

(iii) HUDSON, H.
Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education — Possibility of Structural Change. July, 1985
Paper presented to the National Conference on 'Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education'.

(iv) RYAN, S.
Address to the National Conference, on **'Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education'**. 9th July, 1985.

(v) DAWKINS, J.S.
Higher Education — A policy Discussion Paper — The Green Paper 1987
Australian Government Publishing Service.

(vi) AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
Aboriginal Employment Development Policy
Policy Paper No 1 — **"Policy Statement"** and
Policy Paper No 4 — **"Education and Formal Training Strategies"**
1987 Australian Government Publishing Service.

Policy statements were sought from groups other than the above, but such policies weren't available for the following reasons:

(i) **NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group** (NSWAECG):
their primary area of concern, at present is with the schooling years of Aboriginal children, from pre-school to Year 12. As such, no policy relating to Aborigines in Higher Education, has been formulated.

(ii) **The Australian Teachers' Federation** (ATF)
was still at the draft stage of formulation. That is, it was awaiting the policy statements from the various state teachers' federation bodies. These will be incorporated into its own policy.

(iii) The **Higher Education Board** (HEB):
had no specific policy on Aborigines in Higher Education, and weren't in any stage of developing such a policy. Its prime aim being with provision of funds.

(iv) The **Commonwealth Department of Education** (CDE) or **Department of Employment Education and Training** (DEET):
has no policy relating to Aborigines in Higher Education.

(v) **Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission** (CTEC):
had no policy on Aborigines in Higher Education.

(1) **POLICY OR STATEMENTS OF CONCERN**

The policies or statements, as they were presented, were reviewed in light of implementation procedures, and control or power of or for implementation.

The following was found:

(i) **Policy Statement on Tertiary Education for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders**. 1986
Australian Government Publishing Service.

The NAEC, at the time of the policies presentation, was the advisory body to the Australian Government and the Federal Minister for Education in particular on all issues relating to Aborigines in education, from pre-school, through to post secondary educational services. This advice has been given on a national level, to provide for the diversity of perspectives of all Aboriginal groups in Australia.

How much "power" does the NAEC really have to implement policy, given that the current Federal Minister Mr J.S. Dawkins, is in the process of disbanding the Committee, by December 1988? It is obvious that the NAEC and its advice is considered to be of no use or that it is lacking in some manner.

A working party is being established in its place to make appropriate recommendations to the Minister.

The NAEC policy was developed specifically in relation to the needs of Aborigines in Higher Education.

Note that the advice was given in March 1984, for the 1985-87 triennium, yet not published for public consumption, until 1986. This in itself meant that persons or institutions concerned with Aboriginal participation in higher education, were unable to respond to various recommendations given, in time for their own long term planning.

Even though the NAEC was seen as official *"advisors"*, it also commented on the Governments lack of recognition to this *"policy"* statement.

The former and the current Chairpersons, Mr Paul Hughes and Mr Errol West, both noted their extreme disappointment, "at the lack of response by the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Committee to the proposals" (Pvi) put forward.

In reality, then, the "policy" consists only of statements of concern, and proposals, which might achieve equity for Aboriginal students; if they were implemented! It is an internal policy statement for the NAEC, which could be utilised externally by others as they wish or recognise the policy. As a policy statement for real action therefore it has no empowerment for implementation. The Government's lip-service to the policy, then, can be seen as an example of systemic bias — it holds out the carrot — but won't let us eat!

(ii) NSWTF

Aborigines in Higher Education 1987

The NSWTF, after many years of consultation, endeavoured to create ways in which it, as a union, might support Aboriginal self-determination, initiatives and participation in all levels of education.

This particular policy is a set of proposals in which Aboriginal participation may practically be achieved at the local level, and in that attempt we have a unique first.

The policy was developed in consultancy with executives and members of the NSWTF, interested teachers, members of the Aboriginal Support Group and the Lecturers Association, (which are all made-up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal membership), and the NSW AECG, as well as co-opted persons as they were needed. The policy was accepted at the NSWTF annual conference in 1987. It is a very good indication of organisational support for Aboriginal needs and demands and it provides clear guidelines of how Aboriginal participation in higher education might be implemented.

The NSWTF is however restricted by the fact that it is a union. Thus it is attempting to make all aware of the facilities and support available to them, in relation to Aboriginal Participation in Higher Education, through this union. But it can reach out only to those involved in or with the NSWWTF. It is hardly a document which has power, to implement its suggested strategies for achieving equity for Aborigines in Higher Education. Yet many of the statements/recommendations made by this body are hitting at "grass-root" issues for the day-to-day operations of Aboriginal participation in higher Education.

(iii) HUDSON, H.

Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education — Possibility of Structural Change. July, 1985

This paper was presented by the chairperson of the CTEC to a National Conference on 'Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education' in Townsville, July 1985.

Hudson sees CTEC operating to support Aboriginal Participation and access to Higher Education. Through funding initiatives, providing advice to the Government, and in being supportive of some NAEC recommendations. The main areas of concern being with educational equity, co-ordinated support and student peer support. This he says is evident in the 'stark under-representation of Aborigines in tertiary education' (p.1). Whilst there are many concerns, as yet no policy statement has ever come from CTEC. So once again this paper is only a statement of concerns, not of policy direction, or of how implementation might occur. CTEC have also currently been disbanded.

Therefore Hudson's paper is another example of the need to change but with no indication of how the changes can be achieved. This helps to sustain systemic frustration, and systemic bias.

(iv) RYAN, S
9th July 1985
Address to the National Conference on 'Aborigines and Islanders in Higher Education'.

This paper was an 'address' by the then Federal Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan.

In this paper Senator Ryan is basically using the time to reflect on what has been achieved, rather than on the yet to be filled needs.

The main thrust of the paper seems to highlight a governmental view that, by increasing Aboriginal participation in higher education, the ultimate integration or assimilation of Aboriginal people into this nation will occur.

Other reasons for increased participation are also given and Ryan states: "For Aboriginal and Islander people to realize their aspirations, in areas such as self management and even political goals such as land rights, then participation in higher education can only be a help.". (p2). And further she claims that because the government "recognizes the significant benefits in terms of access to power which higher education gives (it) has been making a particular effort to increase participation by disadvantaged groups". (p2).

This sounds very patronising and gives no real acknowlegement to an awareness of Aboriginal views and what Aboriginal people want out of participation in higher education.

Ryan defines the role of the Government in this process of increasing participation as consisting of advice given to it by groups such as the NAEC and CTEC and subsequently:

- setting broad policy parameters, from which initiatives arise;
- funding special initiatives in pilot projects and those of national importance;

- co-ordinating, overseeing and evaluating developments, making sure objectives are met and progess is made; and
- providing student assistance.

These statements certainly appear to indicate that the Government has set in place strategies to implement policy, however, as yet we still do not have national co-ordination or evaluation of programs. Indeed if each of the statements is taken in turn we find that the only two areas of participation which are operating are in funding special initiatives, and in student assistance. Both of which are clearly in control of the Government. And in terms of general support to the rest of the populace, is very minor and has not achieved educational equity, and on their own will not.

(v) DAWKINS, J.S.
Higher Education — A Policy Discussion Paper — The Green Paper 1987.
Australian Government Publishing Service

This particular document was a discussion paper, which was circulated by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Mr Dawkins.

The document clarifies the governments' view of the role of higher education in society, in relation to other developments in other countries. So there is a highlighting of changes, "changes in attitudes, practices and processes in all sectors and at all levels of the Australian community" (p.iii). These changes are seen to be particularly appropriate to the education system, and in particular to higher education.

The paper raises many important issues relating to the change of structure for centres of Higher Education, which for the Aboriginal sector could be very worthwhile, eg: recommendations for major restructuring to provide equality of participation and access to education. Yet the whole slant of the paper is to change the current educational practices to bring everyone in line with one another and to concentrate on education in terms of employment, "the economic importance or a skilled labour force" (p.iii). This particular perspective to needed changes may be detrimental to Aboriginal objectives and needs.

The role of the Minister and the discussion paper in this case is therefore to act as a catalyst to changes, and to authoritively tell institutions and groups that categorical changes will occur, and that they must be a party to the changes.

In relation to Aborigines in higher education there is not much state, rather the role of the document is to raise issues of concern for the general population at large, but in reality these changes, also affect aboriginal participation in higher education, because of our place in this society. There are some references to Aborigines in higher education but the references are very brief and have no real indications of the future direction in which Aborigines can be involved.

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(vi) AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

"Aboriginal Employment Development Policy"

Policy Paper No. 1 — **"Policy Statement"** and

Policy Paper No. 4 — **"Education and Formal Training Strategies"**

Australian Government Publishing Service 1987.

This particular set of policy papers is made up of five separate policy statements within the one area, of dealing with strategies for Aboriginal employment. From this set has been extracted two particular policy statements which look at Aboriginal education within that framework, to gain an overview of Government views, initiatives and general participation concepts for Aborigines, across the board.

These policy statements stem from a series of recommendations put forward from a Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs, established in October 1984.

The policy statements define the major role of the Government, as:

(a) "to provide a more effective basis for government support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's aspirations to gain employment and provide for their own livelihood wherever they live and in accordance with their traditions, chosen way of life and cultural identity" (Policy Paper No 1 -Page III); and

(b) "to shift away from the welfare dependecy approach of the past towards measures to enhance Aboriginal economic independence" (Policy Paper No.1 — Page III)

For these objectives to be achieved the role of Aboriginal participation in Higher Education needs consideration.

This is in essence the only real policy written, which could actively be implemented. It is a policy statement which gives control and power to various bodies, and which has recommendations which are being acted on. Yet it is aimed at employment, not education.

Final Note:

Despite the lack of empowerment for the NAEC policy Statement, it appears that other involved bodies do take some directions from the NAEC's statements. Many institutions of higher education do take directives for implementing strategies for equity in education from the policy and from past statements issued by the NAEC and other Aboriginal bodies and community groups. However these groups are in reality seen as advisers only, with no control of resources to achieve their stated goals, hence they have no real power to ensure that policy statements are acted upon.

(2) AREAS OF CONCERN

In the six policies and statements reviewed, there appear to be '9' major areas of concern, for Aboriginal involvement in Higher Education. These include:

(i) Aboriginal Participation;

(ii) Funding;

(iii) Employment of Aborigines;
(iv) Unified Support Programmes;
(v) Co-ordination of Funding;
(vi) Provision of Triennial Funding;
(vii) Aboriginal Self-determination;
(viii) Equality of Education;
(ix) Low Retention Rates of Aboriginal Students in High Schools.

These are basic areas of concern in Aboriginal Education, and are commonly voiced by Aboriginal bodies. Yet the emphasis for these concerns are different for each group, with very different goals in sight. That is, from assimilation to self-determination.

It is rather amazing that all these statements list and concentrate on common issues yet special policies have to be written by various committees and then none of these policies have clear guidelines for implementation. Yet considering the ethnocentrism of past and current educational and educationalist practices, I suppose I shouldn't be so surprised.

So there we have major concerns raised by these various bodies. Yet as they stand they are only concerns, not POLICIES. And until such time that Aborigines are fully able to implement their policies with real control/power, they remain concerns only.

As they are they encourage us to believe that we are achieving self-determination in education — but we will never achieve it until the system is made to develop strategies for implementing our concerns. Until that happens we will continue to suffer systemic bias and institutional racism.

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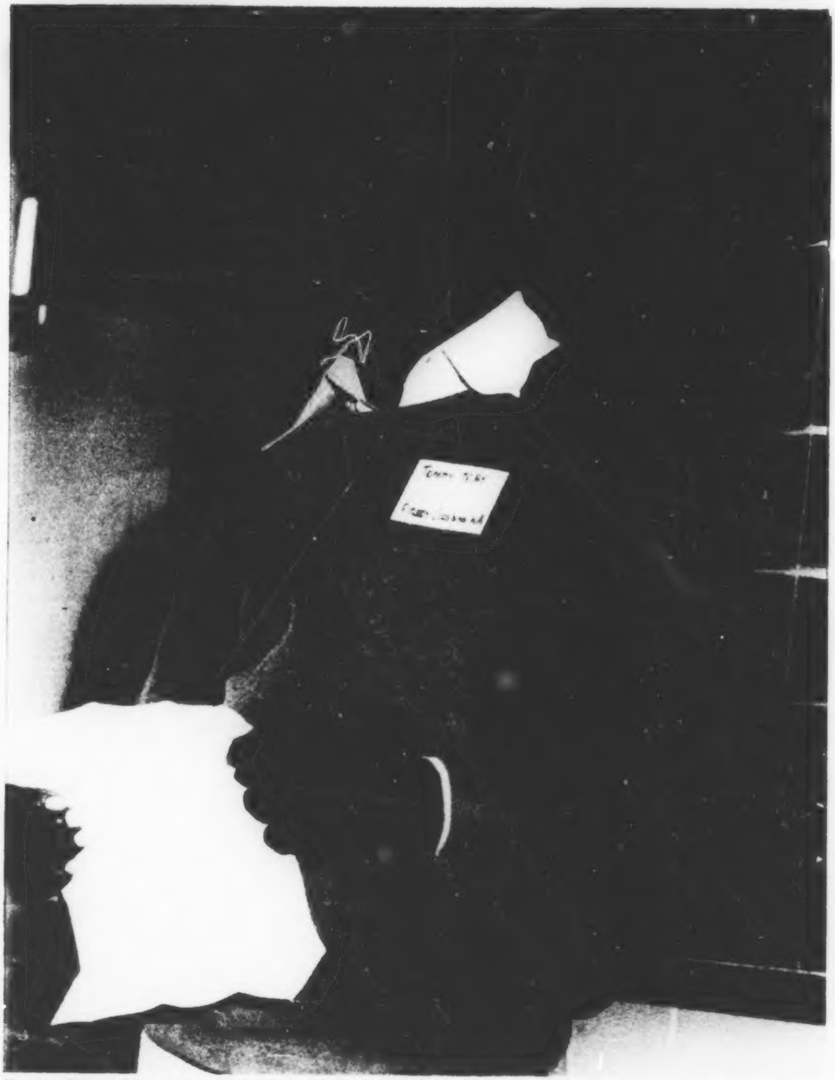
TABLE 1

Aborigines in Higher Education — Policies

Areas for Concern	NAEC	NSW TF	Hudson Chairman CTEC	Ryan Fed Min Ed For Abor	Dawkins Fed Min Ed For Ed System	Em Pol Aust Gov	No's
Wish For —							
1. Alternative Stru	●		●		●		3
2. Alternative Appr.	●		●		●		3
3. Ab. Participation	●	●		●	●	●	6
4. Ab. Self Determ	●	●		●		●	4
5. Equality of Ed	●		●	●	●		4
6. Tea. Ed. Prog	●	●		●			3
7. Unified Sup. Prog	●	●	●	●	●		5
Concern With —							
8. Low Retent. H.S.	●		●	●		●	4
9. Funding	●	●	●	●	●		6
10. Co ord. Funding	●	●	●	●	●		5
11. Loc. of Ab. Pop.	●						1
12. Priority Fields Ed.	●						1
13. Trng for Non Ab.	●	●					2
14. Research	●	●					2
15. Comm. H.E. Inst.			●		●		2
Need To Look At —							
16. Triennial Funding	●	●	●		●	●	5
17. Trng for all areas of Professions	●	●					2
18. Emp. of Ab.	●	●	●	●	●	●	6
19. Est. of Ab. Ed. Cen. w/in Tert. Ed. Cen.		●	●				2
20. Acc. tab. of funds		●			●		2
21. Systematic Ab. Ed.		●					1
22. Ab. Studies & Units		●					1
23. Requirements for Admiss. Entry to H.E.		●			●		2
24. Peer Group Supp.			●				1
Recognition Of —							
25. Aboriginality	●	●					2
Numbers of Concerns	17	17	13	9	12	6	74

SECTION THREE

TWO WAY LEARNING



Tommy May, Chairman Karrayili Adult Education Centre, Fitzroy Crossing, W.A. *Photo by Liam Jones*

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Chapter 22

"COMING UP LEVEL" WITHOUT "LOSING THEMSELVES": THE DILEMMA OF FORMAL TERTIARY TRAINING FOR ABORIGINES

By Stephen Harris [1]

Introduction

My contribution to the theme of this conference, "Learning My Way" is to take what I believe is one of the most powerful educational ideas Aborigines have invented in the face of culture contact, and work out what I see as the implications of that idea for tertiary study. The powerful Aboriginal idea I'm talking about is ***two-way learning***.

In this talk I take this Aboriginal idea and make one white person's applications of the idea to how Aboriginal people can gain diplomas and degrees in the white world without losing their Aboriginal identity. Typical college study is a threat to Aboriginal identity because many Aboriginal values are directly opposite to the values contained in tertiary study. But it is all so true that gaining white qualifications can help Aborigines control their own affairs in the modern world, so Aborigines can't back away from College study. Also, some Aborigines want to participate in some parts of white culture, and one part of white culture is the qualifications ladder.

I need to say at the beginning that I am talking about Aborigines from remote areas, or those sometimes called traditionally oriented. I do this because they are the groups with whom I have worked. But I believe the principles I discuss are more or less true for all Aboriginal groups. I also need to say that I realise there is significant variety between groups, and that talking about "Aborigines" in general can annoy members of distinctive groups. But because I am speaking about broad principles of culture maintenance I hope the use of the general term "Aborigines" will be acceptable.

Before I go too far in this talk, I want to tell you from where I got the title. "Coming up level" is something an old Gurindji man from the Wave Hill area said in explaining why he was interested in learning to read. (Thies, 1987) To "come up level" I believe is a serious hope of Aboriginal people: to have some of their people level on every rung of the white education ladder. That's why Aboriginal people often say "We want our own doctors, lawyers, teachers, pilots, mechanics" and so on. Yet beside this hope of "coming up level" is a fear: a fear that to get white education means that Aborigines take the risk of losing themselves. "Losing themselves" is something I heard at Strelley in the Port Hedland area. Some men there said to me that they did not trust adult training away from their community because all the young people they had sent away "lost themselves": they either did not come back to their people, or they did not fit in if they did come back. These men at Strelley were almost saying "What does it profit a person to gain the whole white world and lose one's Aboriginal soul?".

STEPHEN HARRIS, Batchelor College, P.O. Batchelor N.T. 5791

The Connection between Education and Culture is the beginning of the dilemma

A lot of white people do not recognise that the white education system is a *cultural* ladder. Getting all those qualifications after high school are white culture ceremonies. They are initiations into becoming higher status white culture people. That's where the word "degree" comes from. (Money, political office, seniority in business or the public service, big houses and fancy cars and clothes are other sources of status in white culture, but education is still an important one.) I mention this now because my talk is about culture as much as it is about education. I am saying that any kind of education is a very cultural activity. Education is culture learning. Any educational system is to some extent a culture building system. Many people involved in it do not recognise just how much white education is tied up with white culture. This is where College education can be a threat to Aboriginal identity.

Yet modern Aboriginal people seem to want both: They want at least part of white culture education and they want to stay Aboriginal. But is that possible: to have it both ways? Some people often say "You can't have it both ways", but I think Aborigines want, and need, and should have it both ways, if they are to survive as a distinct culture of hundreds of years into the future. I think it is possible to have it both ways, or two-ways, but this will be very difficult to manage. Why is it so difficult? Because to become and to stay Aboriginal means to hold an Aboriginal world view in the middle of many forces for change. A world view is how a culture sees the world, and how it interprets and explains the world: what it sees as important. A world view is taught by a society's education system — by all parts and stages of the education system. That's true for the Aboriginal education system and for the white, industrial education system.

To go very high on the white education ladder a person has to learn a lot of un-Aboriginal white culture world view, which is tied in with industrial economy and the way white culture survives. So the further you go in either education system the stronger the world view of each culture gets. And this matters so much because the two cultures are so different. The right word is *incompatible*. I believe the two cultures are as different, as opposite in priorities for living, as any two in the world, and I don't believe they can be joined up without the Aboriginal world view being destroyed.

Now I need to be clear on a couple of things here. I am not trying to say that members of the two cultures can't happily meet as (universal) humans in some contexts. And I am not saying that Aboriginal culture shouldn't change, or that white and Aboriginal cultures shouldn't borrow from each other sometimes. All living cultures are changing and borrowing all the time. A culture standing still is a dead culture, good only for museums. I think Aborigines must have the same choices as everyone else in this country. Aborigines have the right to choose, and this talk is really about what could happen as a result of some choices. If Aborigines decide that they want to remain distinctive forever, then this talk is about some ways to help that be possible: some ways Aborigines might live with two sets of sometimes opposite values.

How Aboriginal and white world views are different

Now I need to explain why I think the two culture worlds of Aboriginal culture and white culture are so different or incompatible, and how that affects education.

A few years ago a lot of discussion was taking place about how Australia could be a multicultural society because all the cultures — the British, Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hungarians and Vietnamese could share the same core values — the same basic values. The idea was that if we shared these basic values we could live happily together and could be able to be different on all the less important values such as clothes, manners, foods, religions and so on. The core values were thought to be those like a belief in the fairness of a *democratic* system of government; a belief in the *economic system* of free business enterprise; the *system of law* where individual rights are looked after; the freedom of choice in *religious* matters, and the importance of English as a *national language* through which all the different groups could communicate.

I think some Aboriginal people questioned this view of multiculturalism, but the first time I read about its danger to Aboriginal culture, was in 1982 in a paper by John Bucknall [2] in which he said that the Strelley people could not agree with these core values for life inside Aboriginal society, except for the importance of the English language to everyone in Australia. The Strelley people could not agree with the system of democratic elections to choose leaders within Aboriginal society. They believed there were other, Aboriginal, ways to get leadership. They could not agree with an economic system inside their group that allowed a man to get wealthy and the rest of his family to stay poor. They could not agree with the interpretation of individual rights which said that just because a girl is over 16 she is free to go around with any man of any culture she wishes. The Strelley leaders saw that a school which taught these values would be undercutting Aboriginal world view.

Now I will take this discussion of Aboriginal world view [3] and white education a bit further, with some examples of the deep differences that there are.

The first example is that in Aboriginal society knowledge is owned, or looked after, by particular people. In Aboriginal society only some people can sing some songs; only some people can publicly know some stories (though many people might know them privately); only some people can paint some designs and so on. So in Aboriginal society a lot of knowledge is personal and available to anyone who is smart enough, and perhaps rich enough, willing to work hard enough to learn it. If the white education system persuades Aboriginal people that all knowledge, no matter what culture it belongs to, should be open to anybody, then it has cut away one foundation of Aboriginal society.

The second example is that in Aboriginal society people are more interested in the quality of relationships rather than the quantity of things. I know both cultures have some interest in both, but there is a difference in emphasis. White culture emphasises quantity and Aboriginal culture emphasises quality of relationships. White culture thinks about millions, and fractions, and square roots and long divisions and very complicated formulae. All this spreads through the whole industrial [4] economy. Even white judgements about quality itself are based on quantity: the highest mountain, the biggest diamond, the smallest camera or the oldest culture. (To many whites, Aboriginal culture is valuable only because it is so many years old!) If a white person is interested in another person he or she will want to know how old he is and how much money he earns every year. If whites like a painting they want to know how much it costs.

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and so on. I know some linguists have found that Aboriginal people can make their languages count up to hundreds and thousands, but that's not the point. The point is that different world views lie behind this quantity versus quality contrast, and if Aboriginal people have a lot of training in western culture mathematics they might begin to think in a quantity way.

Another example of difference is in attitudes to the country and its resources. The Aboriginal view of the world is that humans belong to the environment, or at least should fit in with the environment and not try to change it. Industrial society people try to change the environment; they clear land and plough it up; they make irrigation systems; they breed animals for food and sale, and they dig up oil or minerals to make more things. All this is trying to control the environment and the industrial culture's education system teaches people how to do it and to believe in it. Nearly all the types of Western science — biology, chemistry, physics and maths, are directed at controlling nature. In contrast Aborigines try to mostly leave the environment alone, and fit in with what's happening in nature. Aborigines did use fire to influence nature, and today some are in favour of mining, but it is still true that many Aborigines see the way whites go about harnessing natural resources as pushy, greedy and manipulative.

Another contrast is between the Aboriginal religious view of the world as opposed to the Western scientific view. (I know "scientific" is not quite the right word, because all cultures have a science of some kind.) This is really matter of belief versus proof about what causes things to happen; in a religious basis for what causes things to happen, what you believe is more important than what can be fully understood: in the Aboriginal education system people are not encouraged to ask why things happen — they are expected to believe the religious history of how they happened. If Aboriginal people learn a lot about industrial scientific questioning and start asking for proof for things believed inside their culture, then Aboriginal world view is undermined.

Another contrast is that Aboriginal society is a more closed or completed society, and industrial society is more open and not complete. Aborigines believe that the really important events in the world have already happened (when the landscape and people were made) and that a perfectly good social system is already here. White people are encouraged to invent new things often. Words like "progress" and "development" are common. And white people hope that better social and political systems can be developed in the future, too. The two education systems train towards those different attitudes. The white education system encourages students to try to improve the world and invent new ways of doing things. Of course Aboriginal society is actually changing and developing all the time too, but not in the same way that Western society does. If Aboriginal people take on white attitudes to change and invention and so called development, Aboriginal world view will be challenged.

I have mentioned five contrasts in world view. My point is that these things are more than *differences*; they are *opposite*; they are *incompatible*. Private ownership of knowledge is opposite to public ownership. An emphasis on quantity of things is opposite to an emphasis on quality of relationships. Controlling or changing the environment is opposite to leaving it alone, and so on. There are a number of other contrasts, but what I am saying is that if these differences are not respected by education systems, and by white people, and given room to live, then the smaller culture group will lose its identity over time.

Small Cultures Surviving Over the Long Term

Now I want to talk about how small cultures might survive for hundreds of years after contact with a large powerful society.

A major dilemma has to be faced. If Aborigines stay more inside Aboriginal culture they can be strong in Aboriginal culture, but will not be able to defend themselves in white culture. But if Aborigines get strong in white culture their Aboriginal identity could weaken. The dilemma is how to be strong in both at the same time. Aboriginal people want white skills and education, yet they want to stay Aboriginal. How can this be possible? I believe the most powerful idea offered towards solving this dilemma is the idea of two way education. This idea was invented by Aborigines in about the mid 1970's. (The first recorded Aboriginal statement I have come across about two way learning is by Pincher Nyurrmiyarri from Dagarugu/Wave Hill in about 1973.[5]). While Aborigines have invented the two-way strategy, the details of how it might apply in practice have not been fully worked out, but at least people are beginning to work on it now.[6]

One way to work out how two incompatible or very different world views and education systems can exist side by side at the same time is to think in terms of separated culture domains or separated social worlds. Each group's social world can be called a *domain*. I think the word "domain" is a good one. It comes from the study of bilingual people, and how those who speak two languages decide when to use one language and when to use the other. To live by culture domain separation is to decide all the time what culture world you're operating in. Last year a Pintupi man said to a friend of mine at Papunya, John Heffernan, "It's like walking through a door". He meant that moving from one social world or domain to another was like walking through a door. If it's the Aboriginal domain or "room" you're in then you operate by Aboriginal rules. If it's the White culture domain you're in then you operate by White culture rules. Now I know it's not as simple as that. But much of the time the separated domain system is a helpful way to live, and seems to be the least harmful way for someone who has to live in two cultures. I believe that both *whites and Aborigines* need a lot of practice at setting up these culture boundaries, these two social worlds of living which have doors between them. And I believe it is the responsibility of education systems, even tertiary systems, to help people deal with decision making about whether boundaries will help culture maintenance, and if so, how, when and where to practice them. [7]

This idea of living in two domains is not new. Many Aboriginal people have for many years already set a pattern of domain separation. But the pattern needs to be strengthened, and white society needs to accept it as normal and positive human behaviour, and a pattern which will need to last, not just for some temporary phase, but *forever*. Remote Aborigines living on cattle stations, Government settlements and missions have always lived in two domains: from 8.00-5.00 during the working week they did white culture work, lived mostly by white culture rules and spoke English to English speaking people. The rest of the time back in their own domain, they spoke their own languages, mostly followed their own religious practices, and operated by their own world view and systems of relationships. And members of both cultures lived maybe 100 metres apart for year after year and really knew very little about each other. I am not saying this was always a socially healthy arrangement, because there was sometimes also costs on both sides because the barriers were set up by poverty, racism, ignorance and dispossession. What I am talking about for the future is *voluntary* domain separation. The difference between culture domain separation and apartheid is that domain separation is *voluntary*: it increases choices rather than lessening them, and is not motivated by racism but by a freedom to be different. In any case those Aborigines who have survived have done it at least partly by domain separation.

I should also emphasise that living by culture domain separation does not mean that there is no common ground, no sharing between the two cultural groups. There can be a good deal of common ground. But the key strategy of domain separation is that the small culture has some safe places to be itself and to grow. Different cultures need some times and areas of privacy to be fully themselves.

What kind of social living will help people to live in two social worlds? What are those "safe places", or "safe harbours" where Aborigines can live in their own way? I am going to list eight steps that I think can be taken if Aboriginal culture is to have a safe place to continue to grow.

1. A key factor that helps people stay strong in Aboriginal identity and world view in the Aboriginal domain is some *physical separation.* (After all, those remote Aborigines who have survived did so because they lived where it was too hot or too dry for many white people to live and make money.) The outstation movement is a clear recent example of attempts at domain separation. There are now about 650 outstations in remote Australia. But today new kinds of walls need to be built because the discovery of minerals, T.V. and air travel are breaking down this physical boundary protection. Land rights is one form of protection but is not enough.
2. As well there needs to be *maintenance of language* in the home across all generations, and in religious expression, in at least primary school and hopefully in at least some types of work.[8]
3. There will also need to be some kind of *Aboriginal influence in the media,* so that young Aboriginal minds are not colonised by thousands of hours of Western culture T.V. and videos. Aboriginal media productions and local T.V. stations such as those at Alice Springs and Yuendumu will be necessary all over Aboriginal Australia.
4. There also needs to be some degree of *economic independence* to allow Aborigines to be strong in their own culture domain. Land rights should help towards more economic independence.
5. There needs to be *local control of Aboriginal schools.* As well there needs to be at least some domain separation in tertiary institutions after school.
6. A successful culture domain separation strategy will depend on *group action.* All five strategies so far mentioned depend on group action. Where individuals felt too restricted by a domain separation pattern for living they could choose not to participate. This would not matter so long as there were enough people left of

all ages to maintain the group. The only way parents can hope that their children will keep the culture and identity is by membership of a group. In a sense group identity is more important than individual "freedom".

7. Culture domain separation must allow for *social change*. But this change should not be a matter of the two cultures *mixing*, but of each culture growing in its own social domain all the time. There will be borrowing across cultures, but not to the point where distinctiveness is lost.
8. At least some members of the small culture need to be become *highly expert in majority culture skills*, otherwise the small culture will remain open to all kinds of manipulation and dependency.

I am not saying the boundaries between the domains will be the same for every group or even the same for every age group: that's for Aboriginal people to work out. I think that in the Aboriginal culture, the *speed* and *direction* of change will be more controllable by Aboriginal people under a domain separation strategy. When one culture is so small in numbers, and each culture is so different in world view, if people try to mix aspects of the two cultures because it seems like an interesting or attractive thing to do, or because it looks like a way to be friendly, then you can be sure the small culture will suffer seriously, as quickly as in one or two generations. The two world views are not on the same road: they are fundamentally different. The two world views are so different they cannot be mixed without the smallest group losing out. If you put a drop of salt water into a 20 litre drum of fresh, you will not get brackish water, but fresh. The white culture is so big that the two cannot be mixed without the small one being swallowed up. One of the reasons this has not already happened is that the school system has mostly not worked for Aboriginal people and because for them tertiary education is only just starting.

I didn't get the above eight ideas out of my own imagination but by looking at a few small cultures which have survived for a long time in contact with a large society. Examples are the Pueblo Indians and some other Indian groups, the Amish Mennonites and the Hutterites (conservative Christian farming groups in North America) the Gypsies and the Hassidic Jews. These groups have survived by keeping their own language at home and for home based work; they have maintained their own religion and the language that goes with it; they have tried to keep marriage within the group; they have built their own economic base, and they have controlled their own schools (or in the case of the Gypsies kept their children out of schools altogether). They have also had an extremely strong determination to survive in their special identities.

I think it's important to openly admit to ourselves that desperate situations demand desperate actions. The key words are *small cultures* and *long time*. There are in the world today, very few *small* cultural groups which have survived alongside large industrial societies for a long time. The Pueblo Indians are about the best overseas examples to compare with Aborigines. They were invaded by the Spanish along the Rio Grande valley (in what is now New Mexico) in 1598, nearly 400 years ago and they kept their culture by strict domain separation. They live in their own villages or mud forts; they discourage marriage outside the group; they use their own language in their own ceremonies; they ask anyone who takes on a new religion to live outside the village; they grow a lot of their own food; they try to keep their own traditional land and control their own schools and they encourage some young people to go to University and learn Western skills.

Most small cultures surrounded by a much larger society have been swallowed up. So very powerful culture maintenance strategies are needed. In the case of surviving Aboriginal groups determination and will power has allowed them to live so far. The Aboriginal pattern of domain separation need not be exactly like the Pueblo Indian are. Each Aboriginal group can have its own different pattern, but in all cases great determination, willpower and creativity will be needed in the future to maintain long term strategies for culture survival.

It is not my business to suggest that Aborigines *should* remain a separate identity. But if that is what Aborigines *want* — and that seems to be the case — it is a responsibility to pass on to them what is known about *how* some small culture groups are doing it. If Aboriginal groups want to keep a special identity they need to take determined steps about setting up more social boundaries because T.V. and aeroplanes and schools are jumping the social walls more and more.

Now, presuming culture domain separation, or two-way education is a useful long term Aboriginal culture survival strategy, I want to make some comments about what I see as some important operating principles for adult tertiary learning, under a two-way system. I think tertiary institutions which have a significant number of Aboriginal students need *themselves* to practice culture domain separation. In other words when Aborigines go to College they need to know when they are studying in the white domain, when they are learning in the Aboriginal domain, and when they are learning skills useful in both domains. These will be matters which vary among students and which are constantly open to student discussion and decision making.

I will now raise some issues within the white or industrial culture domain of tertiary study, and then later in the Aboriginal domain.

The Industrial or white Culture Domain of Learning

1. **The white culture domain of a two way college should be treated by Aborigines as a giant role play or a huge serious game.** The question of how much from the white domain will rub off into the value system of the Aboriginal students is a very real problem. But there is some evidence from studies of white science students which shows that people can operate two thinking systems. These science students have had a very concentrated exposure to the Western, scientific way of thinking. Yet the research shows they tended to use a very scientific problem solving approach to tasks at school, but outside school used problem solving approaches they had learned at home.[9]. However, there is another way of guarding against how much the Western world view will rub off (although we can't help some "rubbing off".). That possibility is *presenting the white curriculum as a giant role play*, like a very big game. The role play could be put in place by lecturers having the attitude and saying many times in many different ways to Aboriginal students, "You are not learning this because it is better, but because this is the way you can learn to handle industrial culture". After all, all of us participate successfully in different activities with varying degrees of belief or commitment.

2. **The hidden curriculum is a matter for Aborigines to be actively conscious of in the white domain.** Once you're conscious of something it's not hidden anymore. Culture domain separation in college would also mean that aspects of white culture (language, ways of using language, manners, content, teaching methodology, assessment systems and so on) would be learned in a classroom mini-version of white culture, to provide a context and thus cultural meaning to the matters being learned. The important matter is that the normal hidden curriculum be brought out into the open by lecturer attitudes and by such lecturer statements as "you are not learning these skills, or in this way, because they are better, but because they are necessary to succeed in the white world." It is impossible to learn to survive the white high school system, or the white world generally, without learning a good deal of white culture.

Any effective white domain section of a two-way college should be seen by Aborigines as a *white culture learning centre*, more than merely a place where academic things are learned. Aboriginal students in the white domain of a College should be amateur anthropologists: working out the white culture system in a conscious way. If academic information in English is learned without its culture connections to how it will be used in the white domain, then Aboriginal students will not be gaining usable knowledge: they will have it in their head, but won't be able to use it properly in real life. To use white skills and information effectively means learning white culture. One way to be protected against absorbing the hidden values curriculum of all this Western knowledge is for Aboriginal students to be *conscious* of what is being learned. But it is true that to hope that Aboriginal students can learn English or Maths in *useful* forms without knowing *when* and *how* and *why* (all aspects of white culture) to apply that knowledge, is unsound in terms of learning theory.

An example of the connection between skills and culture is the fact that some Aborigines believe that whites speak a *secret English* among themselves or use "big words" or special ways of talking to keep Aborigines out. It only seems secret to those Aborigines because they do not understand the cultural background behind the *words* and *ways of talking* being used. It is impossible really to learn English to any very useful level without learning all the cultural content that the language is referring to. Aboriginal parents need to know this when they sometimes hope their children can learn the English 3R's without learning the English culture. If they try that, white people will continue to seem like they are speaking secrets. Sometimes big words do amount to keeping secrets, but sometimes the problem is not in the bigness of the words, but in not knowing the culture content behind those words.

3. **Academic standards are a part of white culture**. This is a sensitive matter with which anyone involved in cross cultural tertiary education must deal sooner or later. Why is this such a sensitive topic? I think some of us have been conditioned into low academic expectations for Aborigines, or feel that because standards were clumsily imposed in the past, students need to be protected from them today. Paternalism comes in many shapes. Others argue against Western tertiary standards for

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Aborigines as if keeping Western standards out is a way of respecting what those Aborigines have achieved in the Aboriginal domain. That is confusing the two domains. Others ignore Aboriginal aspirations. I am guilty among many other whites of often not really treating Aboriginal aspirations seriously enough. It seems to me that when Strelley elders say they want "proper" schooling; and when a Gurindji stockman who is learning to read says he wants to "Stop level and even", and when, as happened recently at Batchelor College, an Aboriginal student spokesperson said in a speech to the visiting Minister for Education that students wanted qualifications "equal to white people", and when a fourth year student at Batchelor College says "We don't want anything second rate" I think they are talking about standards in the Western culture domain.

I think we not only confuse the two culture domains, but get confused about what is fair. For example, when a College lecturer knows Aboriginal society fairly well, and particular students well, he or she knows that there are remarkable achievements occurring in the Aboriginal domain which go unrecognised in the white domain, and this appears as unfair. While I can understand those feelings, I think empowerment is more important than "fairness", and I think standards, and being on the education ladder in the white domain, are connected to empowerment in today's world. (I also believe the Aboriginal domain can be developed in certain ways in tertiary institutions so that Aboriginal domain achievements can be more justly recognised in those tertiary institutions, but that will be discussed more below.)

I think one way to solve the problem is to stop confusing the two culture domains. I do not want to discuss the issue of standards in much more detail except to make two more comments about it, both following the culture domain separation principle.

a. First, there is the matter of *how status is achieved and knowledge recognised* in different cultures. Each culture has its own ways of recognising achievement and status and knowledge, and we should not confuse or mix the two domains. This will stay true even when change is taking place in each domain. People living in two different culture domains need to meet the standards and go through the initiations and ceremonies which are right in whatever culture domain they are operating. *The very idea of competence is part of a culture.* Competence is culturally defined. Status must be established in terms of each culture. White academic standards are a friend when they are connected to actually being competent, being able to do the particular job, in the white culture domain.

b. The second way in which the principle of culture domain separation can be used in connection with academic standards is in *building and holding bi-cultural identity.* (I want to emphasise here that when I use the term "bi-cultural" I do not mean something like 50-50, or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. I am talking about a bi-cultural *Aboriginal* person, where his or her first identity is Aboriginal, but where he or she comfortably controls selected aspects of the industrial culture.)

> Western academic standards are a friend when they provide those Aborigines who want it with a particular bi-cultural identity in the white culture domain. For an identity to be strong it has to be read back, or affirmed or recognised by other people living in that domain. Qualifications are often one avenue to status, and status is connected with identity, and identity with confidence and self-concept.

An important factor to remember about identity is that it has two parts: the person concerned must have a picture or perception about him or herself, and then that perception ***has to be read back or reflected back by others.*** An example would be an engineer who feels like a engineer, then is thrown into gaol where he is treated as just another convict. Within a very short time he will no longer feel like an engineer but will feel like the inmate of a gaol.[10] The whole idea of culture domain separation is to help people live as happily and successfully as possible in two social worlds: to be successfully bi-cultural, then, a bi-cultural Aboriginal person would need to have his or her Aboriginal identity recognised or read back to them by Aboriginal people: they would need to be accepted by Aboriginal people as Aboriginal. I don't need to tell anyone that. But apply the same principle to the white academic domain: to be accepted or recognised by white culture people. Other people who are accepted as having achieved academically (for example become trained teachers or lawyers) need to read back or recognise Aboriginal achievement in the white academic world.

I know there is a lot more to say about this topic, such as the matter of how to ***gradually*** apply these standards and provide support so that Aboriginal people are not shut out of the system; the value of ***moderating*** or comparing standards between different institutions; the importance of ***access*** or bridging courses for Aboriginal students who missed out on high school so they can catch up ***before*** they begin the full tertiary course; the importance of getting much ***larger numbers*** of both graduate and post-graduate Aboriginal students through before they can influence educational systems, and so on. But this is not the place for that.

However, I would like to say something about self-determination and academic standards. I believe self-determination is the higher priority and that in any educational institution controlled by an Aboriginal community they should be free to decide who they want to employ regardless of any external standards or qualifications. I believe those external standards would benefit the Western domain aspects of those Aboriginal institutions, but I don't think anyone can claim true self-determination is in existence if people are told what is good for them. Two-way schooling can be used as an example. I believe that an independant Aboriginal school, if truly self-determining, should be able to employ as teachers anyone they have confidence in, regardless of qualifications.

Some of this talk about standards may seem discouraging, but the aim is empowerment in the white domain and culture continuity in the Aboriginal domain. While both empowerment and fairness should both be possible at the same time, that may not always happen. So I think empowerment is more important than fairness. It is true that many Aboriginal people are already more bi-cultural than most whites, and that therefore they have had to learn more. And that may be unfair. But skills and behaviours and bodies of knowledge are judged in relation to the culture domain to which they belong. Those skills are often functional in that culture domain. They do a job there, and have a purpose there and they give power there.

In summary, I think the two most helpful principles in thinking about standards are that of identity formation or bi-cultural identity formation, and the idea that qualifications must connect up to the culture domain in which they have meaning and in which they prove competence.

The Aboriginal Culture Domain of Learning

Now I just want to make a few comments about the role of tertiary institutions in Aboriginal culture domain learning.

1. I believe that in the long run, if two-way education becomes widely supported by Aboriginal people, that teachers or Aboriginal lecturers and tutors who want to work in the Aboriginal domain should be able to get tertiary training to help them do their job. I say this because it seems that Aboriginal culture will need to be learned in different ways than it was in the past. **As Aboriginal life style changes, so will the culture reproducing, or ways of regrowing the culture, need to change too.** This might mean that a person whom an Aboriginal Community Council decides is a knowledgeable Aboriginal person in the Aboriginal culture domain, could attend a tertiary College to help learn how to be a creator of learning experiences in the Aboriginal domain of a two-way school. So after only one year's study at this tertiary institution he or she could graduate with a Diploma of Education (Aboriginal culture). This is a bit like the granting of a Dip. Ed. in white society. A person who has, say, a science degree (in other words who is considered knowledgeable in that field) learns to be a teacher in only one year. (I owe this idea to Michael Cooke.) Of course a lot of careful thought would need to be given to what kind of training would help an Aboriginal person be a better facilitator in the Aboriginal domain. This is a delicate matter, because culture can't be taught. People are *socialised* into a society by parents and various institutions. The Aboriginal domain of a two-way school should maintain the opportunities for Aboriginal socialisation. Care would have to be taken to keep the connection between culture and *ways* of doing things; *styles* and *purposes*. The ways people do things, and their reasons for doing them are a central part of culture itself, and if ways and reasons for doing things are changed, the culture is changed.
2. I think the principle that qualifications must be connected to the culture domain in which they have meaning and where they prove competence, is just as important for the Aboriginal domain of learning as in the white domain. In more traditional times an Aboriginal person became "qualified" in different ways than the system works in white society. For example, a person was partly qualified by *kinship*, partly by *performance* (for example being a clever dancer, or having a good memory for songs) and partly by *participation*. (In the Western domain qualifications depend almost completely on *performance*. To try to give Aboriginal students white culture domain qualifications on the basis of having participated in a course, rather than on their performance in it is inconsistent and ultimately not empowering in the white domain). Two examples come to mind where Aborigines have performed very highly in the Aboriginal domain of modern learning institutions. One is

Aboriginal language work in the bilingual programme where various people have performed very highly without much formal recognition. Another example is the Pitjantjatjarra man who has won a Senior Lecturer's position at Adelaide University's music department. He, and others from his group, taught Aboriginal music to non-Aboriginal people. His skills were applied in what could be called an Aboriginal domain of teaching music. In my view there should be some way of accrediting in the Aboriginal domain of a tertiary institution where qualifications can be given at particular levels which would allow salaries to be paid at appropriate levels. (The School of Australian Linguistics at Batchelor is a developing example of this). How the Aboriginal criteria for qualifications of kinship and participation are handled in contemporary institutions will be for Aboriginal Governing Councils of those institutions to work out, but I suggest that whatever status or identity is given by those qualifications will have to be "read back" (or recognised or respected) by members of that culture domain, otherwise those qualifications will become worthless.

In another way I am saying here that if, for example, an Aboriginal University develops in the future in Australia the the qualifications it grants in the white domain will need to be consistent with white domain qualifications from white domain Universities, otherwise the identity which goes with those qualifications will not be "read back" by people in the white domain in Australia. The same principle will apply in the Aboriginal domain of such a University. The Aboriginal domain qualifications it granted would have to be accepted as "genuine" by the Aboriginal population otherwise they would not carry worth.

3. I think one aspect of tertiary study in the Aboriginal domain should be *research* into aspects of white culture which most affect Aboriginal people, and aspects of changing Aboriginal culture which Aboriginal "thinkers" see as important to quality of life in the Aboriginal domain (I owe this idea to Chris Walton and Ralph Folds). Both Aboriginal and white societies need this Aboriginal perspective on research. As a white person I can see some benefits to white society of clearly explained Aboriginal perspectives on Australian history, attitudes to the land and natural resources, the growing need for constructive management of leisure, and the growing need in white society of wider relationship networks and better social inclusion of old people. And Aboriginal society needs Aboriginal (or cooperative) research on topics such as the maintenance of Aboriginal language and culture and Aboriginal aspirations.[11]

4. Another emphasis in Aboriginal domain tertiary study should be a search for ways of developing economic independance from the base of Aboriginal resources, in ways that do not undermine Aboriginal values. For example, there is a need for Aboriginal ways of organising fishing, gathering trepang, hard-wood chipping, mining, tourism, traditional and modern dance and art, wilderness survival courses for white people, and so on. All these activities could be done in ways that do not offend either Aboriginal values or the environment. Some of these activities are now seen as negative in their effect on Aboriginal culture maintenance, but

there might be creative, Aboriginal ways to go about these enterprises in ways which support Aboriginal cultural expression.

An important part of this would be developing a modern *Aboriginal administration style*. An enterprise (or school or health service) cannot be truly Aboriginal controlled unless the way it is *organised* and *managed* is itself consistent with Aboriginal values and priorities. This of course will take time, but the opportunity needs to be there. I think it is the responsibility of specialist tertiary institutions to provide opportunities for much Aboriginal-domain thinking by Aborigines on these matters of economic independance. This means that some types of Aboriginal domain activities are borrowed from the industrial domain, but they would be reshaped into something owned and developed by Aborigines.

5. I think the Aboriginal domain of tertiary institutions are the right places to provide cultural orientation and training for non-Aboriginal people who work in Aboriginal communities or in Aboriginal schools or who want to work with Aboriginal people. This is not well done at present, and where it is done it is mostly by non-Aboriginal people.
6. Finally, I want to say something about *Aboriginal Culture Learning Institutions* within tertiary institutions. There is a concern in some formal learning institutions such as Batchelor College, with its current proposal to develop an Aboriginal Culture Learning Centre, that these institutions are not Aboriginal enough, that they don't have a proper balance in teaching about Aboriginal skills as well as Western ones. There is a felt need, almost as a matter of justice, to respect Aboriginal society in some more *active* way in the context of tertiary institutions. Many ways of making the college *accessible* to Aboriginal students, a place where they *experience success*, and a place increasingly *controlled* by Aboriginal people is not felt to be enough. There is a desire to provide direct support for the continuity of Aboriginal culture, without the institution being like a museum.

I believe the establishment of such formal Aboriginal cultural learning centres might be important and that they are a matter of justice. (Perhaps what are known as "enclaves" could grow into more like culture expression centres as well as having their tutorial and counselling role.) However, I think we should have sociologically sound expectations for them. Again it needs to be emphasised that culture cannot be directly taught: it is socialised. If we are really talking about "culture expression centres" or "culture sharing centres" or "culture doing centres" we may be contributing to culture continuity. What makes up a culture? At one end of a range of aspects of the culture are those that are more tangible, such as material objects, language, music, history, art and so on. At the other end are aspects of the culture which are less tangible such as style of doing things, sense of humour, ways of behaving and believing, the meanings of different parts of life, forms of authority, and so on. And part of culture is the "right" *contexts* in which all these elements have an authentic *function* and where all the *interrelationships* between all these elements is continued.

Let me sidetrack just for a minute on the special functions and meanings of aspects of a culture. The use of English words (with their culturally defined areas of meaning) like "art", "music", "religion", "ceremony" are the beginning of misunderstanding

Aboriginal culture. For example in white society a piece of art is an object of emotional pleasure and individual creativity. In Aboriginal society art can have those values, but also a very different purpose and meaning. For example, at a land rights hearing about the closure of coastal waters near Milingimbi to non-Aboriginal fishermen several years ago, local Aboriginal artists produced paintings which depicted local creation stories which were more like a land title deed in their function than a work of art. After the case was won the Aboriginal artists apparently lost interest in those paintings, because the job for which those paintings were made was finished. Yet to white eyes they were beautiful works of art which should be preserved. Or, to take another example, at a circumcision ceremony at Milingimbi a boy is painted all over with his clan totem geometric designs which represent ongoing creation. He becomes a living-ikon-of-creation-continuing. His status is changed from boy to man and a few hours later what whites would see as a "priceless" work of art will be washed off in the sea or worn off in sleep. My point is that taken out from its cultural job such "art" is just that: art, a white person's idea. (In sociological terms this is called reification: or trivialisation, and artificialisation or the "thingification" of culture).

In Aboriginal society all the elements of culture go together and depend on each other. Setting up compartments is impossible within Aboriginal culture without loss of meaning. Integration is the norm. For example, in white society we can talk about law, religion, land ownership and family relationships quite separately. But in Aboriginal society, to talk about any one of those, one has to talk about them all.

In saying this I am not looking back to the past. I am talking about Aboriginal culture today. What then am I saying about an Aboriginal Culture Learning Centre? I am far from sure myself. I am suggesting that three principles guide us here:

i) the principle of Aboriginal control of Aboriginal enterprise and activities;
ii) the principle of survival by culture domain separation, and
iii) the principle of the importance of ways of doing things, of style, purpose and context in the authenticity of cultural expression.

Cultures do have to change and adapt and modernise in order to stay healthy. As I said before, a fixed culture is a dead culture fit only for museums. (There is a story that when Margaret Mead arrived to open a new American Indian cultural museum she saw some Indian boys playing with fibreglass bows and arrows and plastic guns outside. In her opening speech she spoke about the boys, urging her listeners to see that, though valuable, the museum was not Indian culture: Indian culture was outside with the boys, and the "culture" is "now").

I suggest, as a personal opinion, that whites do not rush in on these things. What can whites do?

1. Whites can help Aborigines keep their culture by helping them control some contemporary *tools* and *skills* such as video recording, audio recording, cameras, helping to build places for safe keeping of objects, helping develop ways of writing their own languages, stimulating new ways of learning some of the parts of Aboriginal culture, such as history, out of books or from the video "storyteller", and stimulating experience in political assertiveness, and so on. But only Aborigines can actually keep Aboriginal culture, and then only by living it.

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2. Whites can help provide part of the money to give Aborigines time to get together to talk out their visions of such ideas as culture learning centres.

3. All of us should see that economic independance, and cultural identity, and long term survival are strongly connected. I would therefore see such a Centre (more a Culture Expression Centre or Cultural Innovation Centre) as a suitable tertiary education path for the development of contemporary Aboriginal art, dance, drama, and music, partly for money making purposes, to move towards an independant economic base in culturally acceptable ways.

Conclusion

If Aboriginal people are to be a distinctive cultural group in 200 years time they need to develop strategies for being two-culture people in a way which leaves their Aboriginal side with a safe harbour in which to live and grow and change. The message from Australia's surviving Aboriginal groups, and few examples of survival after long term contact from overseas, tells us that a safe place for Aboriginal culture must be built by forming culture boundaries, by putting some aspects of the two cultures in separate compartments. Aborigines having areas of disengagement from the dominant society. All this I am calling the private Aboriginal domain where the basic and changing Aboriginal identity is kept up.

I am not saying that each culture should never influence each other, or that Aboriginal culture should not take on change and "own" aspects of white culture. What I am saying is that the white culture is so big and dominating that the emphasis needs to be placed on what is most at risk: and that means keeping the culture boundaries in place and the Aboriginal domain broad and deep enough to stay alive. For this to become a reality the other half: the white culture part of the two culture Aboriginal person, must become strong enough to face and deal with the dominant society. This means high standards in chosen areas of tertiary study.

I want to emphasise that whites cannot afford to put the idea of Aboriginal cultural survival aside as an "Aboriginal matter". It is a white matter too. White Australians need to come to know that they can benefit greatly from the continuing presence of a unique Aboriginal way of seeing the world. And whites need to acknowledge that domain living is normal human behaviour. Both groups need to learn how to "walk through doors". In some ways whites have more learning to do than Aborigines do.

This two way, culture domain separation strategy is a policy of live and let live: not confrontation. But it suggests that Aborigines need to negotiate from a position of strength. The origins of some of that strength I believe are high standards of formal tertiary training in the white domain, and development of Aboriginal domain faculties or departments within some tertiary institutions. It also suggests education of white society into an acceptance of Aboriginal differences remaining in this country *forever*. Of course it is easier said than done to transform these insights into educational programs. Enormous Aboriginal determination, willpower and creativity has been shown in the past, and even more will be necessary for Aboriginal culture survival to be a reality over the long term in the future.

1. While I am a member of the Batchelor College staff, the views expressed in this paper do not imply College policy. I wish to thank Michael Cooke, Ralph Folds, Beth Graham, Cos Russo and Chris Walton for their constructive comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Many of the ideas in this paper are discussed more fully in my book, **Two-way Aboriginal Schooling**, forthcoming. Chapter 2 of that book provides a fairly detailed discussion of Aboriginal world views.
2. Bucknall, John (1982) "Listening to Aboriginal Voices: The School at Strelley" in **Aboriginal Education: Issues and Innovations**, ed by John Sherwood, Creative Research, Perth.
3. These kinds of analyses by non-Aboriginal people always run the risk of creating somewhat inaccurate stereotypes. A recent paper by A.K. Ekkermann (1988) entitled — "Learning Styles, Classroom Management, Teacher Characteristics and Rural-Urban Aboriginal People: Some thoughts" in **The Aboriginal Child at School**, Vol.16, No.1, February/March, is very helpful on this matter.
4. I am indebted to Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope for the term "industrial" society. It is more accurate than any of the various synonyms used to describe non-Aboriginal society in Australia such as "white" or "Western", or "Anglo". The term "white" is still used frequently in this paper as a convenient shorthand.
5. McConvell, Patrick (1982) "Supporting the Two-Way School" in **Language Planning for Australian Aboriginal Languages**, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs.
6. For a different view of "both ways" see McTaggart, Robin (1988) "Aboriginal Pedagogy Versus Colonisation of the Mind" in **Curriculum Perspectives**, Vol.8, No.2, October. Other papers in that journal issue take a variety of views on the topic. See also Bakamana Yunupingu (1985) "A Plan for Ganma Research", Yirrkala, N.T. (unpublished M.S.).
7. Domain separation is a common practice even in industrial Australian culture, and is used to cope with some of the complexities and stresses of contemporary life. People jump between value systems. For example, a businessman can repossess a car for someone for lack of payment and yet can stop and assist him fix up his car if found stranded in private time. Compartmentalisation assists in this with principles such as "Don't mix business with pleasure". A Christian can't take human life unless as a soldier. A doctor is required to swear to heal but there is nothing to stop her buying shares in a tobacco company. A teacher can have an under 16 year old girlfriend, but not in the same school in which he teaches. Even family life is a kind of domain separation, with each family member at home behaving in different ways and taking on different roles than is the case, say, at work or school. [I owe this reminder to Michael Cooke.] Domain separation seems to be a natural human response to reduce social complexity and stress, and to deal with social dilemmas. The majority culture needs to be educated to know that the long term domain separation of a very small ethnic minority is not a threat to national peace any more than membership of various church groups, football clubs, different political parties or the Masons is. Many Christians in this country live in two social worlds, and even believe (or at least handle in some way) incompatible beliefs

at the same time. For example, they believe the Adam and Eve story of creation, but learn about and pass exams about evolution at the same time. All these sub-groups within white society up to a point live by rules of sub-culture domain separation.

8. Fishman, Joshua (1987) "Language Spread and Language Policy for Endangered Languages", in Language Spread and Language Policy: Issues, Implications and Case Studies, ed by Peter H. Lowenberg, Georgetown Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1987, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C.

9. "Several contemporary theories of cognition development and much of the research on transfer of learning suggest that learning, be it formal or informal, is not just a process of knowledge accumulation, but rather one of building up richly organised conceptional networks or domains (Chi et al, 1984; Glaser, 1984, Sternberg, 1985). The evidence suggests that human beings are capable of engaging in complex chains of processing information when thinking and acting, but when they do, the processing is embedded within, and one with reference to, a specific domain of knowledge such as physics, chess or religion. What is striking in the cognitive literature is the degree to which behaviour and thinking processes depend on knowledge structures of the relevant domains, and the degree to which domain separation is maintained.

   Much of the recent work in constructive psychology and on problem solving in a domain, by both experts and novices, points to the importance of domain separation, the difficulty of changing existing structures of knowledge or world views, and the difficulties which arise for the individual when existing knowledge structures are shattered. One clear set of examples comes from the growing literature on children's science and alternative frameworks, and the parallel literature on resistance of scientific paradigms to change, in spite of contradictory evidence. Work in this area (eg Driver & Erickson 1983, Barnes 1976) suggests that, for example, in science classes children often hold two models — they may learn and even understand the "correct" scientific model taught in class and use it to answer school science examinations, yet retain and use alternative models derived from life experiences in accounting for natural phenomena. Barnes (1976) distinguishes between "school knowledge" - the knowledge we use for our own purposes which we incorporate into our view of the world and on which our actions are based. The literature on cognitive change indicates just how resistant to change and how persuasive the separation between "school knowledge" and "action knowledge" can be. It suggests that the last thing people (even "expert" scientists) will do is to make a fundamental change in the structures by which they make sense of their world."

   See Barnes, D. (1976), **From communication to curriculum**. Penguin Hammonsworth; Champagne, A., Gunstone, R. & Klopfer, L. (1983) "Naive knowledge and science learning" in **Research in Science and Technology Education**, 1, 173-83; Chi, M., Glaser R. & Rees, E. (1984). "Expertise in problem solving" in M.R. Sternberg (ed), **Advances in psychology of human intelligence**. Hillsdale N.J.; Driver, R. & Erickson, G. (1983) "Theories in action: some theoretical and empirical issues in the study of students conceptional frameworks in science". **Studies in Science Education, American Psychologist**. Feb. 93-140; and Osborne, R. & Freyberg, P. (1985) **Learning in science; the implications of children's science**, Heinemann." (Personal communication, Colin Power, 1987)

This is hopeful news for the viability of domain separation as a culture survival strategy. But it implies a warning that knowledge in the white culture domain could well be learned in a non-usable way. To avoid this, any teaching approach needs to try to ensure that Aboriginal students get to "own" the white domain knowledge or turn it into "action knowledge". Having a research approach to applications in home communities and an issues-based, problem-posing, problem-solving approach to student writing, is a useful way to go about it.

10. See Jordan, Deirdre (1985) "Census Categories — enumeration of Aboriginal people, or construction of identity" in **Australian Aboriginal Studies**, No.1, for a discussion of the effects of the social construction of identity.
11. See Thies, Kaye (1987) **Aboriginal Viewpoints on Education: A Survey in the East Kimberley Region**. Research Series No.5, National Centre for Research on Rural Education, University of W.A., and David McClay (1988) **Adult Education in Aboriginal Australia: A Report on research in an N.T. Community**, T.A.F.E. National Centre for Research and Development Ltd., Adelaide. (This is a summary of a doctoral thesis recently completed at the University of Queensland).

Chapter 23

LEGAL CONTROL, LEARNING AND THE ABORIGINAL STRUGGLE FOR LAW

by R.G. Broadhurst

Introduction

This essay attempts to draw together some recent criminological work on the subject of Aborigines and 'criminal justice'. While this work has continued to develop our understanding of Aboriginal 'crime' beyond mere description it has tended to produce widespread pessimism and despair about the scope for real change. Some of the pessimism arising from this work may be addressed by considering the role of education in the struggle for justice.

A review of this recent work highlights some of the limitations of previous criminological work. Traditionally such work has been dominated by administrative or legal concerns examined within a positivist framework and exemplified by a plethora of descriptive studies. It has rarely been historically informed. These characteristics partially explain the absence of a fully developed account of Aboriginal 'deviance'. As well there has been a failure to adequately utilise medical, (eg ethnopsychiatry, public health data), anthropological, economic and historical materials. Work on this scale remains to be done and it is hoped that the research programme of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody will begin to synthesis some of these ingredients (Biles, 1988).

It seems the narrowness of much of this 'criminological' work accounts for the predominance of 'legal' solutions eg. legal aid, Aboriginal police, concessions to customary law, special courts, judicial enquiry etc. Some of these 'reforms' have been implemented without much obvious effect on outcomes. Consequently this has led to a stress on minimising the responsibility of the law in 'solving' social problems and, as a corollary, a tendency to neglect the way some laws and law enforcement practices contribute to social problems.

One example of the way this continues to happen is the dispute over the 'facts' of Aboriginal crime and the evidence of racial bias. Despite well documented accounts of structural and systemic disparities in arrest and criminal justice processing (eg Eggleston 1976, Hanks and Keon Cohen 1984, Martin and Newby 1984, Hazelhurst 1987) and many historical instances (eg Gill 1977, Reynolds 1981, McCorquodale, 1987) this can still conflict with, statistically 'objective' evidence of even handedness or even "particularly lenient" and "sympathetic" responses. As one criminologist recently concluded from a statistical analysis of prison sentences, ". . . the courts cannot be held to blame for the high rates of Aboriginal imprisonment" (Walker, 1987:114), illustrating the primacy of statistical evidence.

Suffice to say, on the criteria of statistical inference, this work based on inadequate analysis of sentence data derived from the national prison census, does not warrant

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ROD BROADHURST, C/ Health Department of Western Australia,
227 Stubbs Terrace, Shenton Park W.A. 6008

the conclusions drawn, particularly the suggestions of leniency. In my own work on sentencing distributions based on the entire population of prisoners in Western Australia, I found for some offences such as motor vehicle theft Aboriginal prisoners received higher sentences on average (controlling for age and prior imprisonment), while for others such as assault this was not the case. As so little empirical work has been undertaken on sentencing distributions and equity in Australia, any conclusions must be regarded as premature.

In the above example of 'objective' research the courts and police are mere interpreters of the law's processes and the extent of suppression is entirely the result of general unspecified social forces. Clearly for Walker (1987:116) the antidote is early intervention by parents and teachers to prevent mischief before young Aborigines "begin to collect criminal records".

Sometimes our uncritical faith in the virtues of the rule of law, particularly the final ritual of the court with its emphasis on an adversarial process and 'golden threads' makes the obvious obscure.

A more thorough test of 'bias' is provided by the work of Gayle and Wundersitz (1987) who studied differences in the arrest rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal juveniles in Adelaide (for the year 1983-84; some 7,156 cases of whom 289 were Aborigines). They found in their matched study that there was ". . . no statistical evidence to indicate that, at the point of arrest, police overtly discriminate against Aborigines on racial grounds" (p.92). Instread they found unemployment was "independantly associated with the likelihood of arrest" (Aborigines were more likely to be unemployed) and the pattern of charging did differ significantly for Aboriginal youths. For these researchers socio-economic (poor and unemployed) factors played a more deterministic role in the police decision to arrest than race. Limitations in the official data available did not enable them to explore the issues with adequate rigour and they conclude ". . . whatever the root causes, Aboriginal youths continue to be disadvantaged by the discretionary process operating at the point of entry into the juvenile justice system. (p.93)

Black (1980), in an American study of police arrest behaviour demonstrated that in police-citizen encounters, suspects were more likely to be arrested (for a felony or misdemeanour) if they did not defer to police authority. Factors which affected the decision to arrest included the status and preferences of the complainant, however, a disrespectful attitude on the part of the suspect increased their chances of arrest. "In this sense", writes Black (1980:97). ". . . the police enforce their authority more severely than they enforce the law".

Black found no direct evidence that police discriminate on the basis of race. "(T)he police arrest blacks at a comparatively high rate, but the difference between the races appears to result primarily from the greater rate at which blacks show disrespect for the police. The difference thus depends upon the citizens, not the police." (Black 1980:105). In a postscript Black recognises that the relevance of race to policing is important and complex, noting that the race of the police officer influenced the response to the complainant; black police were more likely to respond to black complainants. "It would thus seem that blacks in the aggregate are more likely to be

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subject to police authority, and less likely to receive their co-operation". (Black 1980:108). Empirical information of this kind on the behaviour of Australian police forces is notably absent (see Foley 1984, Roberts, Chadborne and Rose 1986).

As the courts, or police enforcement practices, are only one part of the criminal justice system it is possible (in abstract) to perceive no one part of the system as 'biased' especially when evaluated on its own terms. This is even more likely if the investigation is informed by and only conducted from the screen of a computer terminal. The limitations of statistical analysis are usually legion and an over-reliance on such methods mitigate against the need to look at the control system as a whole.

THE ABORIGINAL 'CRIME PROBLEM'

It is usually known but rarely acknowledged that Aboriginal over-involvement in Criminal Justice has a widespread impact on Aboriginal self-management and seriously disrupts the development and enhancement of 'educational' or constructive development. One reason for this lack of acknowledgement is that many Aborigines and their supporters feel that by concentrating on 'troublemakers' we can forget that there are many positive changes that have flowed from those able to repossess land or cultural identity. As well, the need to resolve conflicts and living with 'two laws' is intensely important. Fuller discussion of the characteristics of Aboriginal law is not attempted here. Suffice to say that conceptually it is fundamentally different from English law, especially between secular and sacred areas. The role of kinship, restitution and private versus collective action is striking, as are aspects such as strict liability and the character of punishments, to note a few of many divergences (see both volumes of the Australian Law Reform Commission reports on "The Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Laws" for fuller discussion and coverage of civil matters like property, marriage, child custody, gaming and fishing rights etc.).

At this conference there has been a lot of discussion about problems of curriculum relevance and discriminatory aspects of current educational practices. As we have seen from the work done on arrest there is an interaction between unemployment and increased chances of involvement with the law. The focus of this paper is to examine the 'crime' issue in depth because of its significant relationship with employment and our continued under-estimation of its impact on Aboriginal society.

To the effect of 'crime' we could add poor health status as another significant impediment to the quality and potential of Aboriginal life. A high proportion of premature death amongst Aborigines can be linked to crime, (see figure 2). Crime also accounts for a significant proportion of the hospitalisation arising from injury and Aborigines are 3 to 5 times more likely to be hospitalised than non-Aborigines (Hicks, 1983).

By my conservative reckoning at least one-in-four Aboriginal males have experienced imprisonment, many frequently. In one year alone, 1986 for example, some 1,368 distinct male Aborigines were received in prison or 15% of all Aborigines over the age of 16. The incidence of involvement in 'crime' is probably much higher if we were to add in arrest and non-custodial sanctions. Aboriginal females are also over-involved compared to European females. Nevertheless, females of either race, in general appear much less frequently in all crime statistics. On average Aboriginal people are 16 times more likely to be imprisoned than Europeans. These statistics give rise to the 'refugee status' (Stafford 1988), 'third world' (Broadhurst 1987), 'ritual coercion' Parker (1977) 'internment" (Hazelhurst 1987) descriptions applied by many observers.

Indeed, what kind of learning arises from this remarkably frequent event — legal intervention, arrest and imprisonment — in the lives of many Aborigines? And what is the effect of such massive repression? What are the short and long term effects on Aboriginal communities and culture?

In addressing these questions I regard my own thoughts to be more speculative than prescriptive. As little attention has been given to the control aspects of European-Aboriginal contact until recently, our understanding is limited. In this respect my aim is to realise discussion and to encourage a wider interest in this acute and poorly understood aspect affecting the quality of Aboriginal survival.

The main themes that I wish to address are the related issues of concern: the effects of prison, the negative consequences of the 'law and order' lobby, the limits of the law in the struggle for justice, and the problems of Aborigines 'enlisted' into the law enforcement system.

I have already discussed dissatisfaction with the descriptive and despairing character of much criminological work and the over-reliance on legal interventions, to which could be added the failure to develop effective solutions that can be readily applied by Aboriginal people. While European law makers now recognise the need for consultation they continue to underestimate the cultural and social-economic differences between the two races.

It is also helpful to review some of the criminological explanations of this high rate of Aboriginal involvement with the law. Our assumptions about what causes this considerable repression influences our responses and the solutions we generate.

THE EXTENT OF LEGALISED REPRESSION

First let us begin by looking at the size of the problem we are faced with by examining both police and prison statistics.

Police statistics are ordinarily very useful in telling us about the activities of police but much less useful in describing the extent of crime. This is because many crimes go unreported and some, like 'street' crime, are more visible than fraud or tax evasion. Official statistics therefore are conservative measures of crime but can show differences in the involvement of various groups and the frequency of reported crime.

A problem in measuring the prevalence of Aboriginal offending in Western Australia is that police statistics have not been reported by race since 1962, making analysis of race differences and practices over time almost impossible (we invariably have to rely on prison data).

In addition, trends in regional police statistics are confused because of the lack of continuity in the data and the lack of contiguous police and census districts. This, combined with the unreliability of population census data, makes the estimating of the denominator population, which is important if we are to control for population changes over time, uncertain. In short Western Australian police data is extremely difficult to interpret (there are also inconsistencies and aberrations) and it is particularly difficult to observe trends over time.

Table 1 attempts to make an inferred measure of law enforcement practices between the two races by comparing widely different regions of Western Australia. One, the Kimberley in the far north (Broome Police District), has an Aboriginal population representing at least 38% of the region's population (higher in earlier times) while Albany in the south has the typical State average of about 2.5% of the population being Aborigines. These regions of W.A. could not be more different as they represent the opposite ends of both geographic-climatic factors as well as the duration and intensity of European settlement. Albany was originally a small convict outpost (cf. 1827) later settled and developed in the 1830's and 1840's as a prime agricultural district. Whereas the Kimberley was not developed by the pastoral industry until the 1880s and settlement has only intensified since the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's with mining and tourism development.

Table 1. POLICE STATISTICS — 1973-82

COMPARISON BROOME (BR) AND ALBANY (AL) POLICE DISTRICTS.

YEAR (1)	Ratio per police (2)	Charges '000 (3)	Charges total (4)	% juv (5)	% arr (6)
73-74 BR	109.1	238	3601	7.0	89.0
AL	32.9	44	2367	25.6	59.5
74-75	102.6	211	2899	10.3	89.5
	52.0	73	4005	17.8	36.8
75-76	109.5	189	3723	11.0	92.1
	32.4	51	2817	26.3	44.0
76-77	129.1	265	4777	9.2	95.3
	20.3	32	1825	26.4	62.8
77-78	142.2	269	5120	12.6	91.0
	26.6	40	2313	21.4	63.6
78-79	171.8	304	5841	8.9	90.9
	28.6	41	2431	18.6	63.0
79-80	181.1	327	7244	11.2	90.8
	32.0	45	2658	18.5	61.6
80-81	178.5	444	8570	9.5	95.1
	25.2	35	2042	24.1	62.3
81-82	219.6	519	10758	7.6	96.3
	21.5	29	1742	18.5	56.7

Note: police numbers for Albany have been estimated for the years 1977-80 because of variations in reporting the numbers of traffic police assigned to the district; the population denominator has been based on figures reported by police even though these do not coincide with estimates available from the A.B.S.

The comparison in Table 1 is revealing in relation to rates of charging by arrest or summons per 1.000 persons (column 3) and average annual charges per police officer (column 2). Both these measures show that the Kimberley since 1973-74 has rapidly become the most active area for policing. Police are 10 times more likely to charge in this district than in Albany and crude rates of prevalence exceed 50% of the population. The higher rate of arrest (column 6) in the Kimberley also suggests that policing in this district is quite different and more pro-active than in the south. Column 5 also shows large differences between the proportion of juveniles involved with police in the two areas; in Albany about one quarter of all charges involve juveniles and this is typical of the current 'western' trend, yet it rarely rises over 10% in the Kimberley. If traffic related offences are removed from the charge 'rates' then the differences become even more extreme as Albany usually has greater proportions of these types of offences compared to Criminal Code or Police Act offences than the Kimberley.

What is also very striking about Table 1 is the very rapid increase in police activity. In the 9 years this data was available the number of police stationed in the district rose 50% from 33 in 1973-74 to 49 in 1981-82 (59 by 1984-85): but charges more than doubled reaching an estimated 519 per 1,000 persons from 238/1,000 nine years earlier. This increase coincides with the rapid economic development of this region, in the latter half of the 1970's and which intensified in the 1980's.

To put this into context charge rates reported in police annual reports per 1,000 'natives' were in 1948, 69/1000; 1952, 111/1000 and by July 1957 to 198/1000. In 1962 the rate had steadied at 194/1000 (the last in this useful series), whereas two decades later the rate in the Kimberley was between 400-500 per 1,000 persons. So the involvement with police in the fifties also had trebled and was attributed to increases in crime and alcohol abuse amongst goldfield and southern 'natives'.

A general and continuous trend over the entire contemporary period can only be shown for imprisonment and Figure 1 describes annual receival rates by race from 1957 yet even these are, for the period 1972-77, not reported by race. In 1957 Aborigines represented about 20% of male prison receivals; by 1971 they represented about 40%, peaking at 53% in 1981 before declining and steadying to around 38% since 1985. I estimate that the proportion actually peaked at over 60% in 1975-76. Considering that Aborigines made up between 2-3% of the total population in Western Australia throughout this period their over-representation in prison statistics is longstanding. Rather than this rate of incarceration falling over time as conditions have 'improved' for Aborigines it has become significantly worse.

The increases in imprisonment when taking account of regional factors, shows that most of the increases occurred in 'waves' coinciding with economic development of the less settled parts of the state: firstly, the Pilbara in the 1960's overlapping a decade later with sustained increases from the Kimberley and Central desert regions. However, as overall Aboriginal receivals appear at last to have begun to decline as a proportion of prison receivals there is room for some optimism and we may speculate that the worst of this intensified social change and westernisation has passed.

The kinds of offences committed by offenders are still mostly property crimes and some 90% of 'major' crime reported to the police falls into this category (Police Annual

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Reports 1975-81). Also many offenders are charged with traffic related offences (about a third of all commitments) and often alcohol is involved. Frequently these offenders are imprisoned on mandatory terms or serve terms in lieu of fines. The offences for which Aborigines are committed to prison are also predominately offences relating to theft, but 'good order' offences such as drunkenness and disorderly conduct are also common, as are driving and licence offences (details can be found in Broadhurst 1987). While such offences make up the vast majority of reported crimes there has been a worrying trend toward more assaults and sexual offences since the late 1960's. The victims are almost always other Aborigines with women often taking the brunt of this increased violence.

Figure 2 adapted from Dr. Ernest Hunter's (1988, 1987) work on Aboriginal suicides in the Kimberley shows the rapid increases in death by external causes (which includes death from violence, suicide, misadventure and road trauma) compared to the rest of Western Australia over a similar period. To these we may add the higher rates of hospitalisation, infant mortality, diabetes, hypertension, enteric diseases and chronic ear and eye disability. Of interest in this discussion, because of association with deviance and the disintegration of community based controls, is the rapid increase in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases amongst even remote Aborigines in the Pilbara and Kimberley areas since the 1970's (Gracey and Spargo 1987). This may be a sensitive measure of both the increases and character of European-Aborigine contact. Statistics such as these are a good indicator of the degree of stress in a community and corroborate the increased conflict wrought by rapid social change (see also Cawte 1974).

EXPLANATIONS OF THE ABORIGINAL CRIME PROBLEM

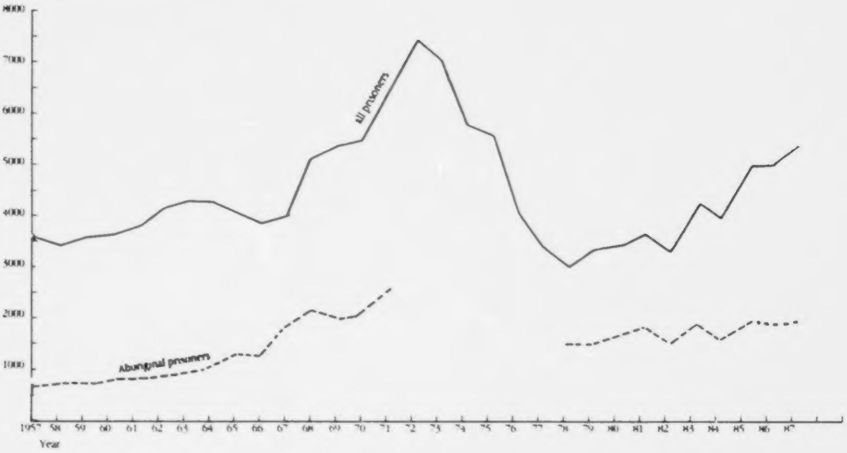
Having described the official statistics it is necessary to consider, if only briefly, the explanations usually given to account for these differences in Aboriginal and European representation in crime statistics. Until relatively recently the main explanations were based on hereditary ('born' criminal), later deprivation (strain/stress), labelling (cultural or racial stereotypes) and conflict (different values) theories of crime causation, (for fuller discussion refer to Rock and Downes 1982).

The hereditary thesis with its origins in phrenology is now fully discredited (Fink 1938). It remains, one suspects, a popular notion, especially when blended with the other 'causes' amongst large segments of the Australian public. The notion of biological causes of Aboriginal crime is now more likely to be explained in terms of vulgarised cultural heritage. For example, the tendancy to go 'walkabout' (interrupts employment); communal sharing and an absence of personal property (leads to a disregard for property); the lack of cultural wisdom or control regarding European imports such as drinking (can not handle alcohol); and 'payback' an example of lawlessnesss. These unconnected illustrations are sufficient to reinforce the ethnocentric notion that Aborigines are morally and mentally undeveloped rather than illustrative of differences in values, and reinforce 'commonsense' views of crime causation. It is usually this kind of understanding of Aboriginal crime that informs advocates of punitive policing.

The deprivation or strain idea rests on the manifest poverty, alienation, all pervading anxiety, stressed conditions and 'immesiration' (Havemann 1985) of Aboriginal people.

FIGURE 1

(a) Annual receivals (males) 1957-86



(b) Annual receivals (females) 1957-86

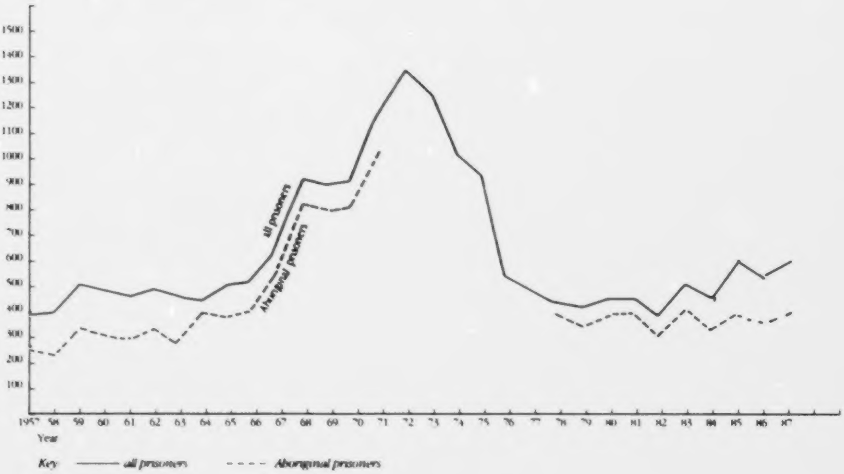
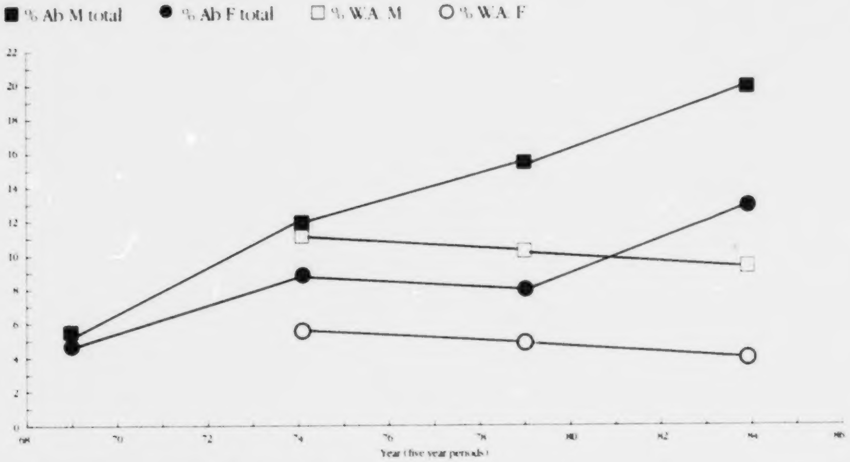


FIGURE 2



% of total Kimberley Aboriginal and W.A. total deaths due to external causes by five year periods (1972 86), by sex. Source: Hunter, E.M. 1987 (b)

An extension of this idea argues that the frustrations caused by deprivation, especially that caused by dispossession often turn inward on the self and behaviour loses meaning and becomes self destructive. Dispossession is particularly destructive because it breaks the symbiosis between land and culture, past and present; more importantly it interacts the association between the material and the spiritual culture. In acute situations this dispossession and alienation becomes the 'structural violence' apparently common amongst indignent people in contact with a dominant intrusive culture (Hoebel 1954, Poole 1986, Hunter 1987, Stafford 1988). Because of this, deviance or criminal behaviour is one of the few ways open to those deprived of the normal capacity to assert identity or acquire the material benefits of the Australian dream or to escape the stigmatisation of poverty and low self esteem through alcohol abuse.

The high rates of unemployment, poor education, poor health and high crime all testify to the extent of deprivation and thwarted opportunity. The poverty cycle is associated with race and crime and hence Aborigines become associated with crime and are "labelled" and then expected to confirm the stereotype characterised above. In practice this means all Aborigines come under more intensive surveillence, especially by police, because of their 'lawlessness' or 'dangerousness' and a self-fulfilling prophecy is generated.

We know from longitudinal and self report crime studies (eg Wolfgang 1974) that most of us, but particularly young males, commit crimes or 'do' illegal things but never get caught, or if caught, are rarely institutionalised or labelled criminal. However, if we come from a poor neighbourhood, look different, behave unusually etc. then our chances of being caught in the law enforcement 'net' is very much greater. And the more we get caught the harder it is to get free from the net. The interaction between these factors and race assure higher rates of involvement with police and formal criminal justice procedures and interventions.

Interest in conflict theory has been revived by the stimulus of the revisionist history which has documented the struggle or 'warfare' between the races over land use (eg Reynolds 1981, Gill 1977, Green 1981). In addition anthropological studies demonstrate that significant differences exist between cultures in responding even to crimes such as homicide, commonly assumed to be universally abhorrent and producing similar responses (eg Poole 1987, Hoebel 1954). The essential theme of conflict theory, whether applied to minorities or social class, is that the legitimacy of the law is rejected by the 'deviant' group on the grounds that it fails to recognise or represent their values. Conflict theory can be applied to Aboriginal aspirations for land versus the imperative to exploit the land in the national interest.

Direct reference to the economic nature of the struggle in contemporary times has been neglected in criminological accounts. As we have seen from the above table and figures, over-involvement in arrest and imprisonment appears very closely related to and coincides with economic expansion — and renewed competition over land use in the hitherto remote and 'unsettled' parts of North West Australia.

Another neglected possibility, often ignored because of its unpopularity with orthodox and even radical criminologists (eg Taylor, Walton and Young 1975), describes crime as a form of resistance or proto-revolution. Cowlishaw (1988), however, uses the idea to describe 'race riots' in Northern N.S.W. Thus the 'criminal behaviour of some Aborigines, while not organised and disciplined in the conventional manner or sense of a 'revolutionary' or millennial movement, spontaneously has all the required ingredients of struggle — anger is not directed randomly but at the state and the symbols of authority for limited political purpose.

Undoubtedly some Aboriginal crimes have elements of rebellion and protest. This is most obvious in the occasional melee or 'riot' in country towns (or the inner city) mostly directed at police and publicans. This resistance has been acknowledged by police in some communities as amounting to ". . . aggressive resistance towards police" (Inspector Rippon quoted in Hazelhurst 1987:243). In this way some Aboriginal 'street offenders' perhaps fits the category of 'primitive rebels' whose motivation is 'the common myth of transcendental justice' which moves peasants and traditional people to action in response to systematic oppression or erosion of longstanding rights (see Hobsbawn, 1959:7). This is precisely the explanation that most frightens the property classes of provincial centres (the Europeans) and perhaps accounts for their occasional intense agitation for more 'law and order'.

The relationship between poverty, stress and economic dependence has been linked to the volume of state sanctioned penal suppression. A useful method of analysing the use of imprisonment, particularly in connection with economic relations, is the seminal work of Rusche and Kircheimer (1939:207). ". . . the crime rate can really be influenced only if society is in a position to offer its members a certain measure of security and to guarantee a reasonable standard of living."

Their idea links labour supply and labour control with the volume and form of imprisonment, ie. the economic motive is the prime criteria for the form, volume and type of punishment employed. The relationship between the impact of equal pay laws in the late 1960's and the consequential wholesale loss of pastoral employment and the high levels of Aboriginal unemployment and imprisonment is yet to be fully or adequately studied. No brief account can adequately explore the insight provided by this work which continues to generate controversy and interest, particularly in terms of the relationship between crime and unemployment (in Rusche and Kircheimer's terms really the relationship between employment and imprisonment). A brief account follows.

In relatively modern times working class demands for universal rights to work demanded the end to penal slavery as it competed with free labour. This ensured that employment, especially paid or profitable employment, could no longer be used as a means of justifying imprisonment. Thus the 'lesser eligibility' principle (that no prisoner should receive from the state more than the poorest free man), the abiding law of all penal administrations required that no useful work could be done and no real effort expended on training such surplus labour. Unemployment, or rather enforced idleness and boredom are the true trademarks of imprisonment and the deliberate wastage of labour power serves only to reinforce the prisoners undeserving status. Imprisonment, it could be argued in the case of the Kimberley, is useful in soaking up unproductive and undisciplined labour without threatening the status quo (of high wages for European labour) and the shortage of skilled or productive labour. In addition it stands as a lesson to any European transgressor that the costs of imprisonment would be both socially and economically high. Put in more basic terms this is, to use Fitzgerald's (1977) phrase, what has been called the 'garbage can' theory of imprisonment — the abject failures of our great societies are swept out of sight. (For an extensive discussion of the relationship between labour discipline and punishment see Foucault 1977, who links the growth of factories with the modern system of punishment).

Some further questions arise, such as, how do we explain the Aborigine who pleads (rare but bizarre and real enough) to be admitted to prison and may even commit an offence in order to gain access (Lowe 1984 and personal observation)? What should we make of Duckworth et al's (1982) observations that imprisonment is an accepted 'rite of passage' for many young Aboriginal men? Have we overused imprisonment so much that we have entirely devalued any of its punitive and deterrent effects? Is the quality of life of a number of Aborigines so miserable as to render the 'lesser eligibility principle' redundant?

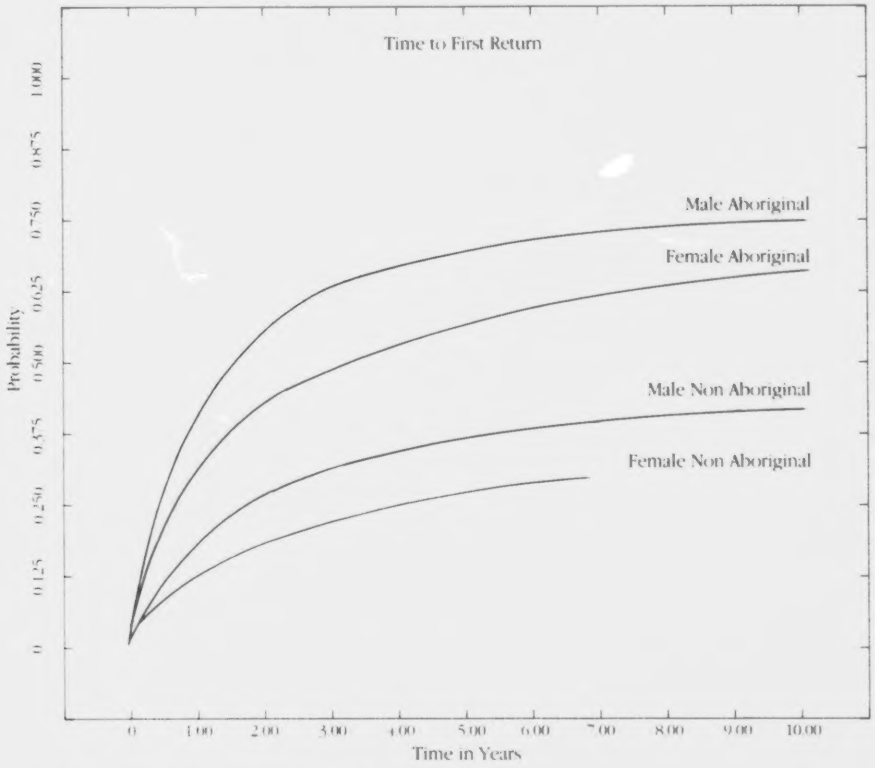
So this returns us to one of our earlier questions which considered the effect of imprisonment on Aborigines. What learning (or anti learning) is produced by prisons or 'total' institutions? Given the unprecedented extent of legalised repression what are the short and long term consequences?

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LAW

The effectiveness of the existing legal interventions and institutions in the control of adult Aborigines can be examined closely by looking at imprisonment and the learning that arises. Imprisonment has a number of expected functions in jurisprudence, such as deterrence and rehabilitation as well as punishment. It is commonplace in criminology to criticise the use of imprisonment for failing to achieve these aims and because of its cost (in W.A. it costs about $130 a day for each prisoner), but rarely do we measure its effects on different groups. Recidivism research which measures the number of offenders who return to prison (Broadhurst and Maller 1988) shows very clearly the ineffectiveness of current penal practice for Aboriginal offenders. Figure 3 shows the failure rate of all prisoners released from W.A. prisons between 1975 and 1987 by gender and race groups.

The smooth curve lines in figure 3 plot the calculated rate of returning to prison since release for up to ten or more years; the dotted line shows the actual failure time. Thus about 75% of Aboriginal males had returned to prison compared to some 45% of European males, and 69% of Aboriginal females compared to 39% of European females. It must be stressed that these estimates are conservative because they count only returns to prison in this jurisdiction and do not count re-offending or re-arrest.

FIGURE 3 *First recidivism by sex and race*



Cumulative Distribution of Recidivism by Sex and Race
Note: Actual time to fail (dotted lines = Kaplan Meier estimator) and estimated time to fail (full lines) from the model 1 (see Note 3) for the major sex and race groups
Source: Broadhurst, R. and Maller, R. (1988)

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For those Aborigines under the age of 20 recidivism was much higher at around 88% and for all intents approached absolute certainty of failure. Irrespective of age, employment, status, schooling, offence type, marital status, and access to special leave and early release programs, Aboriginal recidivism did not vary significantly. Yet older, better educated, employed and early release Europeans all had improved prospects. We asserted that such high Aboriginal failure rates were due to the fact that ". . . overwhelming cultural and environmental forces interact with law enforcement practice so as to mask and trivialize individual differences and pathology" (Broadhurst et al 1988:103).

In response to the so called failure of imprisonment to achieve the reductionist aims of rehabilitation or deterrence (irrespective of race), prison authorities have re-vamped programmes (social and vocational skills, therapy and social work family intervention etc.) designed to change prisoners (eg Cohen 1985, Lipton et al 1975, Bailey 1966, etc.). This 'program mania' may be useful in maintaining the morale of prison staff but tightens control and introduces more and more sublime graduations of punishment. The focus of these programmes has the change or re-socialisation and reintegration of the individual as its primary purpose. For the Aborigines this inevitably means an impossible transformation to embrace the culture of their captors.

The importance of the effectiveness question lies in the ability to determine the facts based on outcomes rather than the rhetoric of legal principle. In addition such facts may help to win the propaganda war on the need to implement strategies other than suppression or legal control, especially the usual methods of arrest and imprisonment. Unsuccessful and expensive mechanisms are harder to justify in the 'corporate' state and excessive use risks community and international censure.

As Clifford (1982:11) observes, "When imprisonment does not deter but is shouldered by the Aboriginal as an inevitable yoke to be carried as a consequence of his residence in a white society, we would be moronic to go on using it punitively and ineffectively". Of course this assumes that effectiveness is intended; that is, that imprisonment should work, but for the purposes of control reductionist goals are incidental.

THE LAW AND ORDER LOBBY

How actions are defined and who has power to define are crucial in understanding how the law may be used to control the activities of one group by another. Language and the use or suppression of language in the process of defining the 'law' is of real importance — if 'suicides' can be described as 'deaths' and in turn 'deaths' become 'hangings' then the 'law' is defined, shaped and mobilised. The law confers legitimacy and can be mobilised to apply censure at varying levels of severity. Discretion operates at every stage of this process and containment of discretion is often the aim of reformers.

The language and rhetoric of the law is seductive with its emphasis on rights: such as the rights to remain silent, to legal counsel, to know the charges against you, to trial by peers, and the presumption of innocence, to list but a few. But as McBarnett (1982) has observed, the law is designed to convict and favours the police and prosecution under the cloak of ritual and pomp. Only the wealthy and well informed can really hope to muster all the scope the technical criminal law provides. If the law and 'due process' is mystified for Europeans, how much more so must it be for Aboriginal defendants, who share neither the imperatives nor language of the law making culture itself.

The police and legal profession primarily operate to control, manipulate, and define the 'law' as its 'servants'. These agents have substantial discretionary powers influenced by occupational culture and class. This discretion is not exercised in purely self interested ways but conditioned by the ideology of the rule of law itself. Thus opportunities exist for reform — but the question arises as to how much may be achieved this way and at what cost. For the confinement of the struggle for justice to purely technical or legal discourses helps to deny the political basis of law making.

How can Aboriginal people use the idea of the rule of law — the Europeans dominant value about the proper employment of state coercion and force — to mobilise the law in the service of the ruled rather than the rulers, to paraphrase E.P. Thompson (1975)?

Linked to the above is the question of how can we combat the powerful and emotive impact of the 'law and order' lobby? This kind of pressure group which has links with some elements of the extreme political right has been particularly active in mobilising the conservative populations of country districts (eg northern N.S.W. Port Hedland, and Geraldton etc.) to 'speak out' against black crime and to threaten vigilantism. Fear can be generated when crime or visible street offences, unrest or disruptive behaviours are perceived by 'moral entrepeneurs' as reaching crisis point beyond the control of authorities (Cohen 1972). The outcome of such intensive 'fear and concern' is crime control i.e. more repression. Law enforcement agencies have responded ambiguously despite the challenge presented by vigilantism because such 'moral panics' create the climate to press for more resources.

There is a need to respond to the 'law and order' lobby in relation to rural Aboriginal 'crime' for the depiction of Aborigines as lawless reinforces pressures for more police, harsher laws, and the isolation of visible 'untidy' groups. This is typically difficult to combat as rarely are Aborigines specifically indentified but rather "certain elements" or a small minority are pointed to as representative of all Aborigines. Those attempting to have wider issues addressed, such as employment, intended and unintended racism, policing methods and so on are often labelled 'radical' or cast as anti police or even for crime and anarchy. Recent 'law and order' campaigns in North West New South Wales confirms that conservative forces are ordinarily mobilised to support the status quo and achieve 'commonsense' legitimacy about the crime problem. (Cunneen 1988 and also Cowlishaw 1988).

This is a recurrent issue for the Aboriginal 'movement' and Aboriginal communities. So how do we address the more vociferous 'law and order' lobbyists who link Aboriginal crime with a breakdown in social order and a threat to the fabric of 'decent' society? At the simplest level this links Aboriginal offending to a cultural predisposition to 'criminality' and is racist inspired or based on vulgarised science as well as naive interpretation of crime statistics. Thus Aboriginal crime reinforces the special place ascribed to Aborigines in the culture of Europeans as latter day 'folk devils'. One way to address this is by using the notion of 'censoriousness' which means appealing to established norms of humanity and behaviour (cf. Mathieson 1965, 1974 who argued that such appeals could only be used with effect sparingly by those in real positions of power). It is possible to achieve some control over the language and hence the practice of the law. But it is necessary to recognise the limits of penal reform driven by and dependant on humanitarianism, for this may serve only to justify the installed remedies. Penal reform cannot be achieved by improving the quality of imprisonment. It is better achieved by restricting its use — and ultimately abolition.

This requires the effort to harness the problematic use of 'public opinion' and its functions of extra legal review and accountability as a vehicle for change. The minority, and the marginal face special difficulties in educating, influencing, and raising awareness, and carrying the 'propaganda' war beyond the level of principle and inalienable rights. Having acquired by struggle formal legal status as citizens, Aborigines must continue to have the 'law in action' realised and accommodated to their situation.

The law does not simply operate in the interests of the 'ruling class' because it can be used to inhibit, frustrate and divert the actions of rulers — the problem for the poor or the weak is to have the law evoked in their interests. An Anglo Australian justice system however free from racial discrimination, can not repossess Aboriginal land or recognise time honoured custom and practice, for these are ultimately political decisions made by law makers.

Alternatively, self help strategies (i.e. Aboriginal courts and community policing) and de policing of Aboriginal communities may have prospects of reintroducing stronger civil mechanisms of social control (and by definition more appropriate and legitimate). At the same time withdrawal of policing would allow a rapprochement in the practice of law enforcement for ". . . the relationship between law and self help is inverse, it follows that a larger and more intrusive a police force is, the weaker self help will be, a pattern that in the long term exacerbate the problem of crime" (Black 1980:195). We may surmise that the extensive intrusion of policing in Aboriginal self regulation has contributed to the demise of effective internalised controls. There is now considerable agreement amongst many experts (eg Australian Law Reform Commission 1986, Hazelhurst 1987, etc.) that greater involvement of Aboriginal people in their 'own' policing and criminal justice processing should be encouraged. However, the degree to which this can be realised is heavily circumscribed by legal principles, like the 'test of repugnancy' and the willingness of police to negotiate separate boundaries of control.

This leads us to consider the functions and conflicts for Aboriginal people involved in realising such solutions. It must be said that enthusiasm for such a solution ought not detract from the need to reform or repeal bad laws such as those relating to mandatory imprisonment for drunkenness, or to prohibit certain police practices relating to arrest rather than summons for summary offences, to specify just two examples.

ENLISTMENT AND EDUCATION

Our final area for discussion is the sensitive matter of the enlistment of Aboriginal people into the law enforcement apparatus. This employment and earnest efforts to educate European law officers is assumed to enhance non-discriminatory law enforcement and consequently reduce Aboriginal-Police conflict. The supposed advantages of Aboriginal involvement are essentially the tempering and mitigation of inappropriate practices. However, the problems in achieving these goals, for those enlisted, are underestimated by reformers. For their task is not just the undertaking of the formal roles assigned them but to transform the agency from within. With such a script, resistance to the inevitable pressures of large bureacratic hierarchies is even more difficult than it otherwise may be. Such staff are prone to fall victim to the pressures of their own expectations, those of their communities and their European employers.

Enlistment of Aborigines into the law enforcement agencies also provides a useful example of some of the problems and advantages of co-option. Indeed is this merely a popular colonial method revived? In the past, even complex societies have been controlled by the effective deployment, by imperial administrations, of indigenous police drawn from distant districts or tribal groups. In northern Australia, frontier police well into this century, used irregular units of black police drawn from settled areas to enforce European law and order (Reynolds 1981, see also Connolly and Anderson 1987 for Papuan examples of reactions to these Police at first contact). Modern experiments in Australia with Aboriginal police have been noted as far back as 1952 (Papunya 'community wardens' Hope 1987) so there is continuity between these earlier attempts and current interest and enthusiasm for such schemes.

A more recent example has been the employment since November 1975 of Aboriginal police aides in Western Australia. Spurred by the Laverton Royal Commission (Clarkson 1975) into the insensitive policing of Aboriginal communities, eight Aboriginal police aides commenced work in the Kimberley. Yet curiously none were enlisted in the goldfields where the incidents sparking the Commission had occurred. Although originally only intended for remote country work, there are now some 51 police aides including 11 based in the city, with a further 20 'on order' amongst the extra 1,000 police to be added to the Western Australian police force (see Government paper, "Working Together to Beat Crime", July 1988).

Aboriginal police aides now make up about 1.5% of the W.A. police — but their powers as constables are limited in respect to the arrest of Europeans. Apparently the direct employment of Aborigines as fully fledged police has been limited or avoided because of recruitment 'standards' (expressed in terms of education), thus necessitating the 'Aboriginalisation' of policing through police aide schemes. From the outset this scheme was criticised by police and others on the grounds that it would produce second class police; police protested that professional standards would be diluted and Aborigines maintained that appointing police aides would delay the recruitment of Aborigines as regular police. Interestingly, initial police reluctance to the enlistment of Aborigines as police has given way to keeness, despite these early concerns with standards (sometimes viewed as a screen for exclusion), because of their utility on the ground and important symbolism of black police in defusing potential criticism. In the Northern Territory and in Pitjantjatjara lands in South Australia police aide schemes have also been introduced as a means of effecting improved trans-cultural

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policing. In other states, as well as Western Australia Aboriginal Police liason units have been established although with limited operational functions.

In addition to police aides various schemes have been proposed and implemented involving Aborigines in court hearings, in an attempt to address some of the difficulties experienced by Aboriginal defendants and witnesses (see for example Ligertwood 1984). The better known attempts include the work of magistrate Syddal (1984) in the Kimberley and a Northern Territory government sponsored programme at a Yolngu community near Yirrkala (see A.L.R.C. 1986, vol 2). In these schemes Aboriginal elders are given limited powers to decide guilt in minor cases and/or are invited to provide advice about appropriate punishment for those offenders found guilty.

These programmes have been criticised on various grounds, apart from their limited success in reducing offending. Hoddinott (1985) evaluated the Kimberley scheme and Williams (1987) the Yolngu, both concluding that the adaptations, no matter how well intentioned, have very corrosive effects on traditional patterns of control (Hope 1987 makes similar observations of the police aide scheme on Pitjantjatjara lands). For example, they confuse kinship and reciprocal approaches to dispute settlement, fail to provide adequate training and support, produce irreconcilable differences in the approach of the parties to certain offences (i.e. from drunkenness to homicide), undermine traditional authority by placing the young and/or urbanised in positions of formal responsibility, and make for the continued interference or paternalism of some of the magistrates involved (see Hedges 1986). Such schemes, Hoddinott, observed seemed to work best in those Aboriginal communities so westernised and fragmented that such self help was an essential ingredient in welding a sense of community.

Thus the particular problems of Aborigines working in the European legal environment are largely structural and cannot be sheeted home solely to individual failures (of temperament or attitude) of either the Aboriginal or the European agent. Although no doubt the capacity for empathy, discretion and creativity in individuals may be the difference between a clumsy or tyrannical control system (individual qualities are important), these are not the essential aspects. Both parties may attempt to reconcile a policing and legal order that is often systematically hostile or inimical to Aborigines and Aboriginal culture but they cannot alter this fact.

The roles and functions typically undertaken by Aborigines for the law enforcement agencies include, to characterise an obvious few:

1) Translator: here the function is to act as a communication link between the two cultures, 'the professional ethnic'. This role is usually conceived as unproblematic but in situations of unequal power it is fraught with opportunities for misunderstandings. For example English language proficiency does not necessarily imply exceptional diplomacy or the capacity for faithful translation.
2) Subaltern: the function here is really to 'fetch and carry': while other roles are recognised they are less important than the undertaking of tasks more or less menial or considered wasteful of the time of a 'fully trained' staff member. This role reinforces the notion that Aborigines are less capable and must wait until they are ready to be developed fully. Some examples include police aides, honorary probation officers, health workers and camp nurses.

3) Teacher: like the role of translator but more pro-active in the sense that the expectation is that the benefit of the dominant culture is sold as good in itself. Illich (1975) called this the 'whitening' agent. Teaching, particularly in its institutional form, as distinct from education, which stresses self-learning, is seen as hindering empowerment.

4) 'Tracker'; here the function is to guide the agency into the best means, sensitive to the customs/folkways of the target group, of achieving the agency's goals. The sensitivity is important only to the extent that this improves performance, for efficiency is the real aim of Aboriginal enlistment. Literally this includes finding Aborigines who may need to be immunised, or counted, or served a court order, etc.

The above roles are of course characterisations and do not necessarily coincide with all practice or aspirations, especially as conceived by Aborigines. Other roles such as, leader or representative, elder, negotiator and mediator may be their preferred functions but the law is in reality ". . . the last bastion to be taken in the cause of Aboriginal self-determination" (Hazelhurst 1987:255).

Conflict of aims and expectations invariably arises in cross-cultural settings even in activities benign and ostensibly good in themselves. In circumstances where social control is the prime purpose very important consideration must be given to the extent that such enthusiasm for enlistment is offset by the tendency to co-opt and neutralise legitimate criticism. Thus the veneer of Aboriginal policing Aboriginal creates the appearance of equality and diverts attention away from the nature and extent of such policing and in particular the content of the law itself; thus policing Aboriginal drunkenness becomes the focus, rather than the utility of the law prohibiting public drunkenness; repossession of land becomes unlawful squatting etc. More cynically, we become overly concerned with the means rather than the ends, i.e. what are the best techniques for enforcing the law, irrespective of its just consequences. Like the environmental officer who waits for a community to be absent from camp before destroying the dogs (which act as a vector for many diseases/infections and will not be willingly destroyed by their owners) or the police officer, in many country towns, who knows he/she can arrest any number of Aboriginal offenders for street drinking if he/she chooses to.

Recognising the conflict of loyalties engendered by enlistment and the conservatism of law enforcement hierarchies Hazelhurst (1987:251) argues the primary role of police aides should be ". . . that of liaison, or cultural brokerage, between the police and Aboriginal people. It is the police aide's role to see that police services are adequate, and tailored as much as possible to community needs; that injustices, based on cultural or linguistic misunderstandings, are avoided; and that cultural barriers are progressively overcome by the facilitation of communication". Again the onus is on the individual to provide the bridge and this may only begin to succeed if police, as Hazelhurst suggest, embrace the notions of community service rather than the 'thin blue line' of force.

Of course the tantalising opportunity for effective internal change almost always seduces us into 'giving it a go'. Some change in practice or attitude can occur, if there is some support, either within the organisation or the Aboriginal community. Thorpe (1987), comparing the situation of race relations in England, has praised the efforts of some agencies, notably those working with juveniles, for their efforts at addressing the effects of race. But converting the rhetoric to practice, even in these positive circumstances, has proven difficult. Certainly tokenistic enlistment fails as the individuals themselves can rarely survive the tensions, conflicts and thwarted expectations. With rather few exceptions those who survive do so by identifying with the organisation in large part and at best achieve acceptance by their European employers. Co-option thus always remains a real possibility and cannot be entirely resisted. Survival seems to increase when groups of Aborigines are enlisted and are able to share experiences and support each other.

Further to the direct enlistment of Aborigines into control agencies is the attempt to change the practice and attitudes of the European police or prison officers toward Aboriginal people. The assumption here is that such staff are either ill informed or racist (or both) and that through education they can be persuaded to view the Aboriginal in positive and non stereotypical fashion. Since Skull Creek (cf. The Laverton Royal Commission 1975) there have literally been dozens of schemes to enlighten the 'force' and the 'screw'. This is rather hopeful and it is unlikely that the premise on which it is based is so simple and mechanical. If statistics are a guide the impact of such educational activities on outcomes appears to be slight.

Indeed there is evidence from the participants that these exercises are counterproductive unless they are highly practical. So far in police and prison training the effort has been mainly with recruits and this is largely mistaken and wasted because of three major factors: the lack of real experience of the recruits, the nature of police recruit training and the approach of the 'trainers'.

1. Most recruits are from the city and they usually lack even cursory contact or experience with Aborigines. As a consequence there is a significant and typical tendency to under estimate cultural differences and to minimise the degree to which Europeans and Aborigines are different. This obviously applies to more traditional communities but is also applicable in urban communities. This inexperience is further compounded by a failure to accept the historical heritage of Aboriginal Police relations. Our education system still represents our early history as benign despite the fact that the police, as 'protectors' of Aborigines shot Aborigines, separated Aboriginal families and came to represent all facets of European dominance.

2. Recruits are quickly socialised and disciplined into the occupational culture of the police. Discussion of lawful discretion (i.e. the law in action as distinct from the 'law in books') is usually avoided in basic training in order to minimise conflicts between the 'original' powers of constables vis a vis the statutory powers of the commissioner. Hence recruits also lack training in the common law discretionary powers of the constable and this ensures any stress on discretion by trainers in applying the rules to account for Aboriginal culture is misunderstood or confusing. Special 'education' on Aborigines presents in sharp contrast to the predominate ethos of the Academy, which stresses repeatedly, that the law is administered

without 'fear or favour' irrespective of social group. To add further difficulties recruit training is usually undermined by the orientation on the job where acceptance by peers requires identification with dominant attitudes.

3. The training input on race relations comes from outside academics or 'professional Aboriginals' rather than significant others such as experienced sergeants or police aides and is therefore externalised. Many of these outside trainers lack experience of police organisation and usually see themselves as advocates for Aborigines. Thus ignorance and idealism combine to cast them in the eyes of police as 'do gooders'.

Considering all these factors it is not surprising that race relations education is often seen by police as purely politically motivated, rather than helpful to them.

While there is a need to raise awareness amongst police, prison officers and law officers, more effort should be invested in promotional and inservice training rather than basic training. Training may be better facilitated by secondments, job exchange, search conferences and other methods eschewed by the Academy approach. Recruit training should be conducted by experienced and empathetic European police and Aboriginal police aides with as little presentation as possible from outsiders. Efforts should be focused on training for officers in communities with a significant proportion of Aboriginal people also should be obligatory. Recognition that policing in Aboriginal communities is a special task requiring approaches and skills different from city policing is the first step to positive change. These options will really only work if police begin to accept prevention as their primary role as opposed to the machismo role of 'crime fighter'.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to briefly cover a large number of topics, which deserve fuller discussion, in order to illustrate the connection between the 'Aboriginal crime problem' and the need for relevant education. In terms of preparing Aborigines for the demanding roles of law agents — 'cultural brokers' or developing strategies to educate law enforcement officials, last decade appears to be one of missed opportunity. Furthermore, as intellectuals and educators, we have been too prone to neglect the ugly side of Aboriginal behaviour and the effects of our control methods in contributing to the problem. We have chosen not to see the interaction between our intrusive practices and the absence of self regulation and we seem ill prepared to take the step of withdrawing far enough to allow communal re-generative processes to work. In addition social control is not just men's business and we should be striving to mobilise women to demand the right to live without violence and abuse.

The current debate would have us believe that we must make a choice between 'separate' development or 'mainstreaming'. Thus, in the case of Aboriginal police aides, they must either become constables or the scheme should be abandoned. Such choices are of course not so simple and Aboriginal cultures and circumstances are highly diverse (an aspect I have neglected to stress) and solutions that work in one place may not work in another. The real test should not be the labels attached to the functions but whether they are effective and accepted by the community they serve. Nevertheless enlistment cannot be encouraged if it relegates the Aboriginal peace officer to the halflight of perpetual transition — it must lead directly to autonomy.

These choices are not matters to be resolved just by legal officials, however learned, and solutions must be sought outside the narrow band of what the law can offer. We have been too readily seduced by the promise of the changes that may follow from changing the law. Too often Aboriginal demands and needs have waited for the law's approval, whereas action and political struggle may achieve more than the tortuous path of seeking the laws blessing.

Legal scholars, law reformers, and governments are sometimes too ready to handball the problem of solving race relations on to the individual. In the end, education seems to be the last refuge of reformers. Even so the dialogue created by education may help the problem rebound on the law makers and enforcers. Yet this conference has highlighted the difficulties of developing curriculum and educational styles that transcend cultural boundaries and empower individuals. Therefore a priority in Aboriginal adult education must be the development of learning methods that address the unique problems created by the administration of the law in a trans-cultural setting. It must give those involved the tools to confidently face their most vociferous and powerful critics, along with disaffected police, the 'law and order' lobby and amongst whom they must also count other Aborigines. As yet we have not heard the voices of those Aborigines involved and it is to them, in their daily struggles to make it better, that we may first begin to look for answers.

Regardless of how novel or inept our attempts may be we must strive to avoid demanding more of the same, for as the Jewish scholars Rusche and Kircheimer (1939:207) observed from the realities of Nazi Germany. "The futility of severe punishment and cruel treatment may be proven a thousand time, but so long as society is unable to solve its social problems, repression, the easy way out, will always be accepted."

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Chapter 24

LEARNING AS AN ADULT

by T. Carlisle

My name is Thelma Carlisle. I'm a 39 year old married woman with three teenage children. My husband works away and is only home for four days every fortnight. My eldest daughter is in her second year at Curtin University, in teacher training. My son is working as an apprentice boilermaker and my youngest daughter is in 2nd year at the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School.

I decided to start at Kalgoorlie College in 1986 because I couldn't get worthwhile employment, all I could get was part-time work. I did one year in the Aboriginal Access class then last year I was 1st year in the General Studies group. We studied Maths 1, Communications 1, Science, Typing, Office Practice, and Aboriginal Language Studies. This year being the Advanced General Studies Class, we are studying Maths, Senior English, Book keeping, Word Processing, Science and we are also doing the bridging course for the Dip Teaching Course from WACAE, part time.

I left school in 1963, after partially completing year 8, in a semi- correspondence type course, at the Leonora Primary School. When I was at school, I never tried very hard and I was the class clown. If we didn't want to go to school we pretended we were sick then Mum would let us stay home. Other days it was better to go to school rather than stay at home to do the housework.

When I decided to start with the Access class in 1986, I was really scared. As I'm very shy and I am really terrified when I know that I will be meeting and talking to new people. I had to prove to myself that I wasn't as dumb as everyone seemed to think I was.

My greatest fear, when I came back to school, was of making a fool of myself. For example, I'm very self-conscious when I have to talk to strangers, until I get to know people I'm very quiet and don't mix much. As a child I felt that people used to talk about my family and put us down, now I wish my children to grow up and be proud of their background. If I think that people are laughing at me I tend to go back into my shell. However I have noticed a big improvement in my shyness. I find it a lot easier to mix with strangers.

By coming back to school to improve myself, I've been able to help my two youngest children quite a bit. My eldest girl, by this time was in her final year at senior high school. I went back to learning for my own self-improvement and to give my children some encouragement to keep going to school and learn. They would come home from school complaining about teachers or the marks that they got, I'd tell them that it is for their benefit and not the teachers that they are at school. They will be the ones who get all the benefits from their education. Naturally, as any parent, I want my children to get a better start in life than I had.

THELMA CARLISLE, General Studies Department, Kalgoorlie College, Kalgoorlie W.A. 6430
BARBARA McGILLIVRAY, General Studies Department, Kalgoorlie College,
Kalgoorlie W.A. 6430

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When my youngest daughter comes home from school very disgruntled about something which has happened or she doesn't understand, I explain to her ways of solving these problems, if I can't help her solve them my advice is then to keep trying, never to give up because everyone else thinks that she is going to fail but it's up to her to prove to herself and everyone else that she can do very well at whatever she tries. If she wants to get herself a good career then now is the time to apply herself to her studies.

Once I had committed myself to returning to school, I felt that I had to follow it right through to the end. There have been many days when things have got on top of me and I've felt like pulling out. But then the weekends would come along and I'd be able to get my house in order and everything would be all right. My husband is very supportive, he encourages me to finish the course. There is so many different ways of learning from when I went to school. The children were always growling that I was showing them the wrong way to solve problems, and I was always on to them to finish their homework, now they get to me about finishing my homework.

So in conclusion, I'd like to say that returning to school to complete my education has been a big help to me, besides giving me more self confidence it has brought to my attention the need to help and encourage more Aboriginal people to also return to school and become educated.

LEARNING AS AN ADULT *by Barbara McGillivray*

Hi! my name is Barbara McGillivray, I'm from a very large family of eleven, five boys, of which two are deceased and six girls. I was born in Leonora many moons ago. I am married with four children, and my husband's name is Alan, his occupation is a bus driver. I went to various schools throughout my childhood, such as Boulder, Belmont, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Rawlina and Leonora lastly. High school, well I was one of the lucky ones! Who was able to go away to Perth for schooling. I went to Applecross Senior High and enjoyed it thoroughly. I had to finish school in the last term of third year. I had to go home and look after my brothers and sisters while my mother was in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital having skin grafts done to her ulcerated leg.

So today as I present my paper I wish to talk about the experiences and knowledge that I have gained through having the courage to return to school. I feel that I have achieved more than I thought I could possibly do.

UPS AND DOWNS OF EDUCATION

Returning to school wasn't something I did on an impulse. I had thought about it for sometime and decided to go ahead. One of my problems at this time was nerves. Boy! do they affect me in some way. After I got over the nervousness my first day wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. It was a bit of a shock at first because when I walked into the classroom it was full of young girls who looked as if they had just come straight from high school. This was tough, I wasn't used to girls' company, because I had grown up with my uncles. The first thing that came to my mind was should I run or should I stay. Well as you can see I did stay, that is why I am here today to present my paper

"LEARNING AS AN ADULT" and to also talk about my achievements I have gained through having the courage and determination to return to school.

CHANGES OCCURRING

The studies I have completed have given me knowledge and understanding of many issues in life. I have also learnt that there are issues that I had no knowledge or understanding of, but have since learnt about. My attitudes towards others and myself have changed completely boosting my self-esteem up and giving me the interest and willingness to learn. I have confidence in being able to participate in debate issues, especially in large groups of people this I feel has given me the ability to be sure of my facts and figures and to follow my instincts through.

FAMILY

When I first started college I felt that I was neglecting my family and friends, but then I realized that furthering my education was not only for my benefit but for theirs as well. My husband, well he was a bit of a pain at first, but he soon grew use to me going to school.

Having completed two certificates I have found that I could help my children with problems that arise with their schoolwork, especially maths. Most days the children and myself do our homework together.

My family are tremendous, they help me in every way that they can. The children, my husband and I take turns cooking, cleaning etc. One good thing is the encouragement that I receive from my family and friends. The last two years, however have been a hassle as I suffer from strained tendons in my right elbow. This I found very hard, as I had to spend last year (1987) carrying a tape recorder and typewriter where ever I went. I could not write so I had to learn to write left-handed. Boy! was that hard. Then 1988, difficulties continued.

So this year has been the hardest. There has been many deaths in my family and all so close together, you begin to wonder, if you can go on. Well I think to myself "Chin up" and keep going. Now take our "Open Day" at Kalgoorlie College (6th Sept). This particular day things were going so well, when I heard that my best friend's mother had died, then to top it off I had an emergency phone call to say that my mother's house had caught on fire. Well, that finally did it. I closed the office door, sat down and had a good cry. A few seconds later I was fine. I knew I had to go and finish answering questions for the reporter from the Kalgoorlie Miner (as I was doing that before the bad news). "Never mind" I said to myself, "keep your chin up". So a few days later I heard that my cousin passed away. Boy! what a week! I know now that things can only get better. So to sum up all I have said, I'd like to say that, I am a better person since returning to school. I don't have to prove to anyone what I can do because I know I can do anything that I put my mind to. When I make a decision to do something I am committed until I have completed it.

Chapter 25

EXTERNAL PRE-TERTIARY COURSES FOR ABORIGINAL ADULTS IN THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Doug Hubble
Norma Morrison
Barbara Harvey

The Keynote Address at the 1987 Conference of the National Aboriginal Education Committee in Tasmania spoke of the need for:

> ". . . increasing the level of Aboriginal post secondary school educational attainment to a level that is commensurate with the rest of the Australian population . . . "

and of ensuring that:

> "Aboriginals, regardless of where they live, are provided with appropriate school facilities." (N.A.E.C. Report 1987)

The "regardless of where they live" provision presents particular problems for Western Australian Aboriginal Education. While approximately half of the state's Aboriginal people live in or near to cities or large towns, many live in remote locations in the largest state of the Commonwealth. And while provision is made in most of these places for at least some educational experiences for children, for adults the distance to a place of mainstream formal learning, should they desire to participate in such programs, is often insurmountable.

Attempts have been made to meet the needs of these people by drawing them on to a city campus for a short time period of study. Sometimes this has proved to be successful. But for many people the experience has been traumatic, either because culture shock and homesickness have forced them to withdraw from their courses to return home or because, in having spent time in the city, they no longer feel comfortable in their home territory. Forrest & Pead (1986) explain this in relation to teacher training. And it must be noted here, that many people, for family, social or other reasons are quite unable or unwilling to leave the land to which they belong.

To cater for the special needs of people in isolated situations (and while "isolated" immediately conjures up an idea of vast distance it can also apply to the isolation of the prison cell or the isolation of a suburban home giving care to children or older people). The Western Australian College of Advanced Education, through its Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, offers courses of external pre-tertiary and tertiary preparation studies, for Aboriginal adults.

DOUG HUBBLE, NORMA MORRISON, BARBARA HARVEY
Department of Aboriginal & Intercultural Studies, W.A.C.A.E., Mt Lawley Campus,
P.O. Box 66, Mt Lawley W.A. 6050

THE BEGINNINGS

In the original charter of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program established by John Sherwood and others in 1973 at the Mt Lawley College was a commitment to develop a course of further education for Aboriginal Teacher Aides. A Committee established to develop this program met over several years and after negotiations, some research and consultation, agreed that the immediate requirement was for an external tertiary preparation course.

The intent of the original course was that it be of one year's duration, be provided by correspondence, consist of four units of study and be supported by local tuition.

In 1978 the Advanced Education Entry Certificate (AEEC) course was offered to the first intake of students who included Aboriginal staff employed across a range of agencies such as schools, health, welfare and police. From the initial intake of 67 students in 1978 the course population expanded dramatically over the following couple of years.

In the first year of the course an evaluation study commissioned by the College and undertaken by Mike Robinson recommended the introduction of a lower level course. This was designed to cater for the group of students who had enrolled in the original AEEC course but were neither ready for such a program nor had any immediate expectation of undertaking a tertiary course.

The General Education Certificate (GEC) course was introduced in 1980 parallelling the AEEC course but assuming a lower literacy level and a stronger employment and life skills orientation.

From the outset those involved in the preparation, delivery and maintenance of the program were conscious of the diverse backgrounds among the student population. This included the location of students from desert communities through to the metropolitan area, previous schooling experiences ranging from minimal primary schooling to students having attempted matriculation. There was also great diversity in employment and work experiences.

These courses have now grown to encompass a student population in excess of two hundred and fifty, including interstate enrolments, and have offered Aboriginal people an opportunity to continue with their education, enhance their self image and increase their employment options. The courses have been recognised by a variety of employing authorities as providing the education component of their Aboriginal staff training programs. Previously it was recognised by the Commonwealth Public Service Board as providing an alternative to successful completion of year twelve schooling for Aboriginal staff.

THE CURRENT PROGRAM

The two course structure of the program has been maintained, with the GEC course being designed for adults who want to pick up on some of the basic skills they feel they have missed during their school years, and the AEEC course being offered as a skills development program leading towards entry into tertiary courses within the College. Some people also use the AEEC program with a view to increasing their work opportunities or to enable them to better cope with their family and social responsibilities.

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Each course includes units of Communications, Mathematics and a unit of Aboriginal Studies. The units are prepared for use on a part time external basis with the support of an on site tutor provided by funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Enrolment may take place any time throughout the year (this flexibility is appreciated by students) and is open to any person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent who is seventeen years of age or over, and who has a level of literacy deemed adequate for studying in a correspondence mode. Other limitations to enrolment come only in terms of staffing and funding.

Given the focus of preparing persons for tertiary study in the College the courses are mainstream in terms of the skills around which they are developed. They offer themselves as just one option for Aboriginal Adult Learning. However, despite its mainstream flavour, the courses have been written with special attention to the cultural heritage, interests and needs of Aboriginal people. The course writers and administrators of the course are very grateful for the guidance and support of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee of the College and to the Aboriginal staff who are available to respond and advise.

The courses are written centrally but they rely very much on local tutors to adapt both the content and the required outcomes to the needs of the students. The importance of the tutor to the program cannot be over emphasised. Every student has a tutor. And these tutors are given the right to take a great deal of initiative — within certain guidelines — in adapting material to suit local needs. So courses are taught quite differently in some parts of Arnhemland from the way they are taught in suburban Perth.

Within the frameworks of the courses, the need for reviewing, updating and rewriting is regarded as an important and ongoing requirement. Currently the GEC Communications units and Community Studies (Aboriginal Studies) units are being revised and the AEEC Aboriginal Studies unit is being updated.

OUTCOME OF THE PROGRAM

In addition to the many graduates from these courses who have used the awards for either job enhancement or participation in further study there are many other less readily identified benefits from these courses.

For many of our students this represents their first venture into education since their initial school days and for many it is the first time they have achieved success in this context. Many students only complete one unit of the course and use the experience as a springboard to other courses. Others may only remain in the course for short periods, but often return at a later date and this is encouraged by the flexibility inherent within the program. A significant number of students every year use these courses as a preparation for the WACAE's Aboriginal Student Intake Testing, a mature age tertiary entry selection process conducted by this College.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

While the external pre tertiary courses were developing within the Mt Lawley and then WA College there were other programs underway including the formation of [illegible]

Aboriginal Enclaves and the growth of Aboriginal studies. The external pre-tertiary courses assisted a wide range of Aboriginal staff in undertaking further education but apart from the Teacher Aides able to attend the metropolitan campus few were able to undertake professional training. Following on from a research study in 1980 the College agreed to support the development of off-campus centres. In 1983 the first centre opened in Broome enabling a predominantly Aboriginal group of students to undertake the standard three year primary Diploma of Teaching without coming to Perth. The College has accepted that external studies for Aborigines were viable and undertook to externalize the Diploma of Teaching course for this group. This program has since grown with the centres operating for three to four year periods at Carnarvon, Kununurra and Kalgoorlie.

To cater for Aboriginal Teachers in traditionally orientated communities the College has commenced the Traditional Aboriginal Teacher Education program being piloted at Noonkanbah in 1988. This course is dramatically different from the standard teacher education course and will graduate teachers qualified for a specific cultural and linguistic area.

The most recent initiative has been the introduction of the Aboriginal Education Worker Programme. This has been established to enable AEW's to complete the first year of the Diploma of Teaching while remaining in their schools. In the first semester of this year 15 AEW's enrolled in a modified version of the AEEC as a preparatory phase to the tertiary units which were offered in second semester. Nine students were successful in joining the tertiary course and have been released for 50% of their work time to undertake two units of the course. Over four semesters they will complete the eight units in the first year and will then have to choose whether to join an off-campus centre or come to the metropolitan campuses. A new industrial classification is being established for those AEW's who complete this stage of the course and who choose to stay in their schools and teach.

ACCREDITATION AND REVIEW

Both the GEC and the AEEC Courses are accredited courses within the College and formal certificates are awarded on the successful completion of each.

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Chapter 26

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING FOR INTELLIGENCE AND FOR EMPLOYMENT

by Judith Keavins

Intelligence Tests, as the name suggests have been used to determine how "intelligent" people are — how brainy, how good at using their heads, how good at thinking, at solving puzzles or problems or dilemmas.

Vocational tests, on the other hand, have been used to see how suitable a person is for a particular job, how likely to be good as a mechanic, or as a typist, or a pilot, or a bank clerk.

These two types of test can be seen, therefore, as general and specific, intelligence tests being more general and vocational tests more specific. In a cross-cultural context the question that needs to be asked is whether they can legitimately be used for people of different cultures.

First, do ***Intelligence*** Tests work in the same ways for people of all cultures? The short answer is "No". These tests should probably be called "tests of cultural learning", since they tend to be performed best by people of the culture they come from, and who therefore have had the best opportunities for the type of learning required to solve test items. If you are asked, for example, to say who invented the light bulb, or what is a dozen, or what month comes after March, or what is a glacier, you may be most likely to know these things if you are a Western child, or if you have had a Western upbringing. This same upbringing will be likely to help you, also, on the "Performance", or non-verbal, items which form part, perhaps half, of some well-known Intelligence Tests. These items may be puzzles made of cut-up pictures, or block designs, or shapes to be matched with other shapes. Although it has been suggested that they should be easier than verbal puzzles for people of different cultures, this turns out not to be the case. In a Greek study, for example (Fatouras, 1972), children performed better on translated verbal items (of the Wechsley Intelligence Scale for Children) than on the non-verbal Performance items. Such a result must have occurred because people play in different ways and with different things as children, even between sub-cultural groups of the broad Western culture; and the puzzles and problems which make up the Performance items are based on those known to children within only one sub-cultural group, that of north-western Europe. Blocks, for instance, and especially picture-blocks, may not be used in other cultures and sub-cultures, yet knowing about them should help to solve block patterns and puzzles which are often found in tests. Since test items have time limits, those children who played with blocks when younger can be expected to manipulate them more easily, and thus to complete block pattern test items more quickly than others, who will lose marks for slower performances. Some non-north-western European children may see blocks for the first time in the test situation, and

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JUDITH KEARINS, Department of Psychology, University of WA, Crawley W.A. 6009

must learn their properties *as well as* how to make the test patterns from them, while north-west children already know about blocks, and need only to use these already familiar shapes to make new patterns. The Greek children of the Fatouras' study presumably lacked some of the experience, or cultural learning, required by the test, and so obtained relatively low scores (IQ scores of 89 instead of 100 as expected for north-western people).

The study of Greek children carried out by Fatouras raises the interesting issue of sub-cultural differences. Over the past 50 years or so many such studies, using a number of different tests, have been reported from different European countries, or from migrants to America who came from different European countries (for example, Hothersall, 1984; Lynn, 1978). In general, high test scores (100 IQ or above) have been reported for people of northern and western European countries or offshore islands, while lower scores have been reported for people of southern or eastern countries. People of Caucasian stock living farther to the south and east, in Iran, Iraq and India, have also scored relatively poorly on these tests. This means that the highest scorers have mostly been north-western European people, whose cultural learning would have best matched the cultural learning of the test devisers. (Note that high Japanese scores have been reported in the last few years, (Lynn, 1982) — which may indicate, in high technology cultures, a certain learning style which helps test performance; or certain learning elements common to both types of culture but not present to the same extent in other groups.)

From the European score differences it must be concluded that Intelligence Tests cannot be considered equally useful for all children. It is not sensible to suggest that the people of southern and eastern European countries should be generally less intelligent than those from the north and west, yet this conclusion would have to be accepted were no fault to be found with the tests. Past history suggests no such European differences. Other differences, however, do exist — in the treatment of children, (for example Friedl, 1962) or in attitudes to intelligence, and to child performance, and motivation or adult approval, for certain types of task. Since such differences exist, factors other than intelligence must therefore be implicated. These factors might generally be called "cultural learning".

Non Western people might be expected to differ even more than people from different European countries. They should therefore show even greater differences on IQ tests. This has not always been the case, although generally it might be said that those people showing the poorest performances tend to be farthest removed, in cultural terms, from the culture of origin of the tests. McElwain and Kearney (1970) found this when the non-verbal Queensland Test devised by them was performed badly by remote area Aboriginal people and well by urban Aboriginal people, with medium contact people performing at intermediate levels. In Australia all investigators using Western tests have found a similar culture contact or cultural learning effect, although not all have made this interpretation (e.g. Porteus, 1966). This means that very little, it anything, can be concluded about the *intelligence* of Aboriginal children from performance on Western tests, since their level of Western cultural learning cannot be determined.

Rather than assuming different levels of intelligence (which cannot after all, be validly tested) it is more useful to think of different patterns of ability as characterising people of different cultures. Children of one culture may be good at something which children of another culture perform badly, while the converse may be true of something else. Some of the special abilities of all non-Western children not possessed by Western children will therefore not appear in Western IQ tests. One such skill seems to be visual spatial memory, which has been shown to be much higher in Aboriginal than White Australian children (Kearins, 1981). This difference, favouring the Aboriginal children, is probably due to differences in child-rearing practices between the groups (Kearins, 1986).

In summary, then, Intelligence Tests cannot be seen as equally useful for people of different cultural groups. The cultural learning required for successful performance on these tests is more likely to occur in north-western European (or similarly oriented) groups than in others, even eastern European people performing at lower levels.

People of different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different patterns of ability, and therefore cannot be expected to perform in similar ways on tests coming from only one cultural group. This means that intelligence, which can be measured only indirectly through what has been learned, cannot be sensibly assessed by the same tests for children reared in different ways.

The story may be somewhat different for *Vocational* or *Occupational* tests. These tests are used (as in vocational counselling), to determine the suitability of different people for particular occupations and to select suitable applicatants for available jobs. The tests need to be closely related to the job requirements. If mathematical calculations must be made in a job, as, for instance, in banking, then mathematical calculations will be included as part of the selection tests. Or if applicants are tested for suitability in clerical work, then the tests used will involve typewriting, as well as English usage and whatever special skills are needed for the job in question.

When selection tests are as closely related to job requirements as in these two examples cultural bias in the tests themselves is unlikely to affect results. If applicants can score well on the tests, then they are likely to be able to do the job for which they are tested, but if they cannot score well then they might not do well in the job, at least at the time of testing. (They may *become* suitable by learning the skills required).

Although job selection tests are much more closely related to particular jobs than Intelligence Tests are to intelligence, or to school ability, and thus less likely to be affected by cultural bias, it is still possible for members of some cultures to score poorly for reasons other than lack of ability. Some may be more affected than others by *test anxiety*, for instance, and this may be felt more by members of cultural groups in which test taking is not common. It may be felt more, also, by people affected by lack of confidence or a relatively poor self image, which may be why more women than men have been found to be affected. If this is a factor in someone's poor performance, it may be better (if possible) to provide opportunity for a short trial at the job itself. Such a trial, however, may have the effect of greater demoralisation and anxiety if the job proves to be too difficult — so it is necessary for someone to know beforehand, with some certainty, that she has the necessary skills.

Overall, then, while *intelligence* cannot be assessed sensibly in one cultural group (for example Aboriginal) by tests devised within another culture (for example north-western European), job selection depends only on the possession of the skills required for the job. To do a certain job, it is necessary to possess certain skills, and where selection tests are very closely related to job requirements, successful test performance can only be seen as a sensible requirement for selection. In cases where extreme nervousness exists, selection procedures may be relaxed (and a trial at the job perhaps arranged), but to relax these a great deal may not always help an applicant, who may have difficulty doing the job. The best way to become suitable for most jobs is therefore to learn the skills required, no matter what the culture of origin or the cultural context of the job.

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Chapter 27

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FOR ABORIGINAL ADULTS: SOME ISSUES"

by Isabelle Procter

In this paper I will attempt to address issues which I believe are pertinent to the development of literacy skills and competencies for Aboriginal adults. The issues that will be focused on are as follows:

1. What is meant by the concept of literacy?
2. What are the purposes of literacy for Aborigines?
3. How can successful literacy development for Aborigines be promoted?

The Meaning of the Concept of Literacy

Cole and Keyssar (1985) suggest that conventionally 'literacy is understood as the ability to use graphic symbols to represent spoken language' and as such is based on the use and knowledge of print, e.g. to read and write. They contend however that additionally literacy can also refer to 'the ability to interpret or negotiate understanding within any mode of communication'.

Both concepts of literacy are viewed by them [illegible]portant as different forms of mediated human activity. Both can be considered as 'equipment for living which influence the richness of our lives not only in terms of how much equipment we carry with us, but also how we use that equipment and in what contexts it is relevant. In this sense literacy, both print and non-print related, can give human beings access to other minds and in doing so, extends people's ability to share meaning in their joint endeavours (of human activity).

If Cole and Keyssar's notion of literacy which includes both print and non-print media can be deemed as valid, then the concept of literacy can relate to many other forms of communication such as visual media, art media, and oral media. Likewise the relationship between different forms of communication, both print and non-print, can be used to coherently make the connections beween literacy forms e.g. forms can be used in conjunction with each other as well as separately (such as when the television version of a story is used to comprehend the written text). Such connections are likely to increase the meaning and usefulness of the forms of literacy in terms of creating shared meanings within sociocultural circumstances.

PURPOSES OF LITERACY FOR ABORIGINES

The purposes of literacy for Aborigines has to be addressed in relation to the meaning of the concept of literacy. For instance, if literacy refers to the different forms of mediated human activity as proposed by Cole and Keyssar, then some forms of literacy, particularly the oral and art mediums of communication, have always had a

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ISABELLE PROCTER, Conservation and Land Management,
50 Hayman Road, Como W.A. 6152

purpose for Aborigines. Oral competence in the mother tongue or community language as well as cultural comprehension (two mediums proposed by Budby, 1986) and maintenance through the art media, had and still have importance within Aboriginal society. As Davidson (1983) has noted:

> "Australian Aboriginal societies traditionally were oral cultures. Even now, tribal and non-tribal communities still rely mainly on oral communication as a means of interpersonal and inter-community communication."

However if literacy refers only to the form of print-related communication and its associated activity of reading, then its purposes and importance within the Aboriginal sphere appears a different matter. Fesl (cited in Davidson, 1983) in her study of three Aboriginal communities in Victoria concludes that those Aborigines demonstrated little or no interest in (reading and writing) literacy tuition. As well she contends, 'literacy ability . . . has little value as a skill in Aboriginal society' and Aborigines are often inherently suspicious of written materials. Fesl (cited in Budby, 1986) further contends that

> ". . . Aboriginal society has survived throughout time without the need to resort to (print-related) literacy."

The term "Aborigines" in this paper is used to refer to both Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Nonetheless, although traditionally and presently among many Aboriginal communities print-related literacy has and still is not regarded with much importance, the situation has been changing. Budby (1986) points out that many Aboriginal communities promote literacy in English as important in the education of their children and, although only in recent times, the need to read and write a language has become important in (traditional) Aboriginal society. Certainly, depending on the category of Aboriginal communities, the perceived need for Aborigines to become literate in order to survive in mainstream society has been present since the days of assimilationist policies, and in the present time, attempts to encourage Aborigines to recognize the societal importance of literate status are constantly occurring. No doubt the presentation of papers at conferences by people like me can be referred to as demonstrations of positive outcomes of print literacy development for Aboriginal people.

Many reasons why Aboriginal people should become print literate have been most eloquently offered by linguists and educationalists alike. In 1987 I attended an Aboriginal Languages Conference at Batchelor, NT, where Jim Martin's talk indicated the following reasons why Aboriginal people should learn to use different forms of writing both in the vernacular and in English:

- To conserve (save) and maintain the language and culture.
- To achieve status and power in mainstream society.
- To communicate with others both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.
- To negotiate with Governments and policy makers.

Although these reasons seem pertinent and appropriate in terms of encouraging the development of comprehensive print-related literacy skills for Aborigines, they perhaps should be examined in relation to what Winchester (1985) refers to as two categories of print-related literacy, e.g. elementary literacy and high grade literacy. Winchester states:

> "Elementary literacy is being able to read or to read and write or to read and compose in ordinary ways. High-grade literacy is what university disciplines are all about. The possession of elementary literacy in an individual is not likely in and of itself to have any special effects. However, it does enable, when exercised, such things as time-independent communication with others and, by means of the content potentially made available, could lead to a change or expansion of an individual's picture of the world.
>
> The impact of high-grade literacy on an individual is enormous, for its possession enables the individual to escape from the tyranny of memory as regards details, permitting, at least in principle, the dwelling on generalities, the simultaneous consideration of numerous logical and empirical connections, and the indefinite expansion of arguments. But to gain these benefits, long and arduous training in the bookish disciplines is necessary. Thus the importance of the university."

If Winchester's categories of print-related literacy are valid, then there are certain implications for Aborigines in terms of their attainment of "acceptable" literacy skills and competencies. For instance, as indicated in part by Martin's conference address, the level of literacy required for Aborigines to attain the status of being "literate" by mainstream standards is likely to be the category of high-grade literacy. Whilst many Aboriginal people may be prepared to attain the level of elementary literacy to survive in mainstream society, few may have the motivation and educational experiences to attain the level of high-grade literacy.

Clearly a dichotomy exists. On the one hand the level of high-grade literacy is accepted as the mainstream yardstick to measure the literate status of Aborigines. On the other hand a majority of the cultural group is unlikely to attain this level of literacy. The dichotomy presents a situation which if not seriously addressed will no doubt result in the non-acceptance and disqualification by mainstream society of the appropriateness of literacy skills and competencies attained by a majority of Aboriginal people for their survival. It will also result in lip service being paid to the consideration of cultural factors that will influence the levels and forms of literacy which are perceived to be relevant and adequate to meet the needs and serve the purposes of many sections of the cultural group.

A case in point is when reports or submissions commissioned by Aborigines but not written by them are unacceptable by high level officials because they haven't been written by the Aboriginal community group themselves'. Yet similar reports or submissions commissioned by politicians or the Prime Minister and written by their delegates, eg press secretaries, advisors, etc, would never be considered unacceptable as legitimate communication. Consequently a majority of Aborigines are considered to be 'illiterate' and remain 'disempowered' in accordance with the promulgation of high-grade literacy levels which maintain the status quo.

If the situation is to ever change, then what Smith (1985) terms 'the metaphor of literacy' may need to be altered within mainstream society so that the communication structures deemed appropriate can match the way in which many Aborigines perceive the world and can operate as effective communicators.

THE PROMOTION OF SUCCESSFUL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT FOR ABORIGINES

The alteration of 'the metaphor of literacy' in mainstream society has significant implications for the promotion of successful literacy development for Aborigines. From my interpretation it is based on the premise that different forms of communication as literacy valid have to be accepted, and that Aborigines' strengths in non-print forms of communication have to be recognised, extended, and used as a means in themselves as well as the basis to develop skills and competencies in print-related literacy areas. Additionally there needs to be cognisance of the connections between the acquisition of adult literacy skills and competencies and the social context of the learning process.

Much has been said and written about the validity of the Aboriginal learning system as a functional system for the education of Aboriginal people. Harris (1984) points out that (traditional) Aboriginal learning styles 'evolved as adaptations to cultural, economic and technological realities for Aboriginal people'. He contends that although very efficient for those purposes, they are not efficient for all modern purposes and indeed the value of traditional Aboriginal styles is necessarily limited in some instances due to the nature of what is to be learned. In essence the (traditional) Aboriginal learning system is not a functional learning system for everything that needs to be learned.

In contrast to Harris' premise, it could be argued that the learner's cultural affiliations does have bearing on whether a formal or informal style fits the learning task best. However the point that perhaps should be emphasized in relation to the acquisition of adult literacy skills and competencies is that the learning process needs to occur within a related social context. This means that not only should the leaning experience be culturally and socially significant, it should be used as appropriate content. For instance take the example of a hunting or fishing activity which is of cultural and social significance being used as the content focus for the development of literacy skills and competencies.

Harris' comments that language is used to stand as symbols for real experiences which lead to further use of symbolisations through words. If this is the case, then it surely follows that real life and social experiences should be used as the content basis for developing functional literacy skills and competencies in Aboriginal adults. Mention is often made of the premise that learning to read is more successful when reading skills are taught within the context of reading. Unfortunately in many instances the context of reading does not incorporate the relevance of content of materials and texts. In the main these tend to focus on culturally and socially insignificant experiences. Consequently literacy learning is inhibited and the development of skills and competencies is hampered.

In conclusion the following strategies are offered as possibilities for the implementation of the forementioned viewpoints:

— Involve the Aboriginal community in decision-making about programs that attempt to make print-related literacy instruction a purposeful and culturally valued activity.

— Include the extensive use of the Aboriginal students' mother tongue or community language (e.g. Kriol) in any literacy related program. The students' language should

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be appreciated, valued and accepted as an integral part of their cultural identity and value system.

- Use pictorial and visual materials/resources as legitimate tools towards print related literacy development in order to bridge the gap between indigenous Aboriginal concepts and those of the teacher/mainstream society relating to literacy.
- Allow time for effort and development of understanding of print related concepts and conventions — these do not occur overnight.
- Promote creativity rather than correctness and quantity in writing programs. Correctness is legitimate as part of the editing rather than the creating process.
- Ensure that the content of materials (including texts) used for print related literacy development reflects the cultural concepts and understandings and the systems of knowledge to which Aboriginal students are familiar and also relate to culturally and socially significant experiences.
- Place equal importance (and demonstrate this) on oral competence and cultural comprehension as is placed on reading and writing, e.g. encourage use of taped and video talks/discussions and presentations.
- Use classroom genres that permit Aboriginal students to make connections between what is known and what has to be learnt.
- Involve other Aboriginal adults who are competent speakers, readers, and writiers, and who can participate in collaborative learning.
- Ensure teachers of Aboriginal students develop the following:
  - an adequate level of knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal students' styles of learning and participation.
  - strategies to use the systems of knowledge that Aboriginal students bring with them as a starting point to help them develop print related literacy skills and understandings about the functions of these skills.
  - a satisfactory rapport with Aboriginal students who generally are 'people' orientated.
  - a commitment to helping Aboriginal students achieve success in their learning and self esteem.

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Chapter 28

THE ABORIGINAL EDUCATION UNIT DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION

by Barry Thorne
Wayne Morris
Terry Walker

AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Until the commencement of special courses for Aboriginal people in 1974, TAFE had been noted for the lack of Aboriginal participation in its programs. An informed estimate is that there were 3 or 4 Aboriginal apprentices in NSW in 1973.

The program of what is now the AEU began in 1974 with two pilot Pre-Vocational courses at Sydney and East Sydney Technical Colleges. These courses were conducted after discussion between officers of TAFE, DAA and other interested individuals, who were concerned with the unemployed difficulties of Aboriginal people — particularly of school leavers — and saw the need for training in job skills.

At the time of the commencement of these courses, some departmental representatives undertook a study tour of New Zealand to examine the Maori Trade Training Scheme. Although the New Zealand Scheme was not followed in all details, some basic features were noted as being applicable to training courses for Aboriginal people in NSW, namely, vocational oriented courses. These courses were adapted to the department's Pre-Apprenticeship programs. These course covered the industry areas of Bricklaying, Hairdressing and Vehicle Trades.

The success of these courses led to the expansion of the program in 1975. Further courses were operated and a TAFE Teacher was seconded to co-ordinate the program.

The current staffing component of the Unit stands at 28 full-time officers (27 are Aboriginal) and 8 temporary officers.

CURRENT PROGRAMMES OPERATED BY THE UNIT

GENERAL SKILLS

This course started as a response to Aboriginal community needs. Aboriginal communities wanted to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. When this was achieved they felt they would be able to make further vocational or educational choices. In trying to find a model for a literacy and numeracy program attention was paid to a number of factors:-

1. Aboriginal adult students were not participating in any numbers in existing TAFE literacy/numeracy provision.
2. the Aboriginal education research project Bala Bala revealed in a survey that . . . "most adult Aborigines, even those admitting to having literacy difficulties, are not interested in literacy per se."

MR B. THORNE, Assistant Co-ordinator, Aboriginal Education Unit, TAFE NSW
MR W. MORRIS, Senior Regional Aboriginal Co-ordinator,
Aboriginal Education Unit, TAFE NSW
MR T. WALKER, Electrical Trades Teacher, Petersham Technical College, TAFE NSW

3. literacy is not just a skill but a value and must be defined in a cultural context. Comparative education research reveals that values need to be examined, not across the nation, but by community to community.
4. literacy programs for disadvantaged groups should be linked to other efforts to improve their condition.
5. empowerment for individuals and communities was sought as a product of such programs.

A decision was made to provide a course which increased literacy and numeracy skills in a non-threatening supportive environment. But literacy and numeracy would not stand alone. A full-time (18 hours per week) program was to be run, built on electives chosen by each community. The plan was for the literacy and numeracy core to achieve relevance through the social context of the electives. Increased interest and skills gained in the electives would reveal the need for literacy and numeracy to take students further in their area of interest.

The model chosen incorporated recommendations from Bala Bala. Programmes were to be student based, with student involvement in the selection of teachers, subjects, material and involvement in organisational details such as times and locations.

Individual courses, the result of consultation with the Aboriginal community during as well as before a program commences, are diverse. Communities vary enormously and so programs must be designed for each community.

Electives have been as diverse as bricklaying, keyboarding, screen printing, farm welding and legal studies. These are studied with the core of literacy, numeracy and often Aboriginal studies.

Early evidence of Aboriginal General Skills courses indicates the full student involvement at all stages of the course, from planning to evaluation, ensures success of the course in terms of student attendance and commitment, progress in skills and development of interest in education.

CERTIFICATE IN GENERAL EDUCATION

In some respects the Certificate in General Education is equivalent to the NSW Department of Education School Certificate. In TAFE it comes under the umbrella of the School of General Studies, and has recently been revised. The course is flexible and is able to serve Koories of diverse backgrounds. From the CGE students can go to many different TAFE courses.

Compulsory subjects are English, Mathematics and one unit of Science. The Humanities section of the course includes a wide choice of subjects. Of these, Aboriginal Culture, Australian History (40,000 years), and Aboriginal Community Studies, are written specifically for Aboriginal students, though they may be chosen by any student, black or white. These subjects are equal to Australian Geography, World History, or Economics for Living.

In most subjects, an external examination is required, though in most cases this is only worth 20 per cent of the final mark. Many of our Aboriginal students attempted these external exams for the first time in 1987. Most achieved high marks, or marks which matched their class marks.

The publication of many Koorie books, covering Aboriginal literature, history and politics, has made expansion and revision of the Aboriginal component of the course much easier, and provides the students with well presented, and interesting resources. This is a good foundation course, whether or not participants are interested in further education.

TERTIARY PREPARATION COURSE

The AEU began running its TPC course in 1984 in Armidale, Bathurst and Narranderra. The subjects were selected to combine general education skills with an orientation to Aboriginal studies. The TPC is now seen to be the natural articulation from the new Certificate in General Education, and aims to achieve academic paths for Aborigines keen to extend their education.

The electives currently offered are Anthropology, Media Studies, Contemporary History, Environmental Studies, Politics and Government, Philosophy, Australian Society, Education and Society, Literature, The Australian Economy, Legal Studies, Contemporary Aboriginal Australia, Mathematics, Statistics plus one subject from the Science program.

In real terms the TPC has a common goal with the Higher School Certificate. The emphasis is on students developing a sound skills base in organisation and research as well as written and oral presentation, which prepares people for the workforce or further study.

Koories have responded well to TAFE's TPC, and all indications are that they find it very relevant. Aboriginal films, videos and books are used extensively in the TPC curriculum, and the adult-centred approach to learning ensures that the students own cultural heritage is a meaningful part of the course.

THE BUILDING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

TAFE's Building Apprenticeship Programme runs jointly with the Aboriginal Development Commission, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Housing, Public Works Department, Department of Employment Education and Training, NSW and Local Land Councils and Local Housing Co-operatives. The success of the program is an excellent example in interdepartmental co-operation.

The Housing Co-operatives and Land Councils select the apprentices and are involved in the design and selection of sites for the houses. In consultation with TAFE they also select the on-site teachers.

The ADC, DAA and Department of Housing provide much of the funding and the Public Works Department indentures apprentices and lends them to TAFE for four years. The DEET covers much of the apprentices' costs and TAFE employs the Teachers and Sub-Contractors.

The program has been a huge asset to Aboriginal communities which can now have an input into all levels of the construction and renovation work. Previously most building was done by outside contractors which is not as satisfying to the overall needs of the Aboriginal community.

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The present programs allow Aboriginal people to be employed building their own houses. At the end of their training period they can tender for further work, if they have also gained their Building Foreman Clerk of Works Certificate.

RURAL SKILLS

With the acquisition of lands under the NSW Land Rights Act, there has been an increased demand for training in Rural Skills. Courses are run in Tamworth, Murrin Bridge and Cowra.

Some students are doing the trades course in Rural Skills and others are doing a more advanced management course.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS COURSE

A variety of Office and Management Skills courses have been run by the AEU, often in co-operation with the DAA and ADC. These courses are part-time and short term and have not fully equipped students to run organisations as large and complex as today's Aboriginal Co-operatives.

In 1984 a bridging course started at Kempsey College which leads to a two year full-time Management Course. The students are nominated by organisations in the region and spend three days per week at College and two days per week working for their organisations.

1987 has seen the emergence of Small Business Management Courses which begin with a seven week introductory program and leads into satellite six week programs which are extensions of previous courses which the students have successfully participated in. In all of these courses the students are doing accredited TAFE subjects which enables students to receive advanced standing in appropriate full-time TAFE Business and Administrative Studies courses, or allows them to gradually work towards the completion of such certificates under the fractured basis. Students are selected and work with their organisations in much the same way as the Kempsey model.

The AEU in co-operation with Tranby Aboriginal College, the NSW Land Council and the NSW MAA run courses in Land Council Management throughout the state.

CHILD CARE COURSES

In 1983 a conference requested that TAFE become more involved in Child Care courses for Aboriginal students, because of the unavailability in many country centres of the courses already in existence.

In 1984 a bridging course leading to the Child Care Certificate Course was designed and piloted. The course was built around the need to have it offered on a block release mode. At present the course runs at Wagga Wagga and Macksville (2 courses) and a new bridging course has been introduced at Erambie Mission at Cowra.

THE MOBILE UNIT

Early in 1984 a PEP-funded Mobile Unit, designed as a building workshop and classroom for remote sites began operations. The unit has travelled around NSW and is currently at Wilcannia.

THE EORA CENTRE

The Eora Centre is located in Redfern, and was officially opened by the Minister for Education in July 1984. It is being completely refurbished by the Department of Public Works and equipped and staffed by the AEU.

Two full-time non accredited courses are being run and subjects include Dance, Mime and Movement, Speech, Drama, Guitar, Flute, Drums, Creative Writing, Painting, Drawing, Photography, Screen Printing, Story Telling and Video. Some students have acted in Australian films and television series since starting their course and the TV documentary, "Eora Corroboree" has been made about the centre. Theatre Arts has recently been introduced as an accredited TAFE course.

TRANBY ABORIGINAL COLLEGE

Tranby started 30 years ago as an Aboriginal run college in Sydney's Glebe to assist co-operatives throughout the state. Today it runs an extensive range of courses including Skills Education, Business Studies, Tertiary Education Preparatory Certificate and Land Council Administration Courses. These programs are largely funded by the AEU.

COURSES IN PRISONS

In response to the Alexander report on Post Release Support for Aboriginal Prisoners an interdepartmental committee between TAFE and the Department of Corrective Services was established in 1986. At the same time a study by the AEU on the education needs of Aboriginal prisoners was completed.

As a result of these initiatives full-time courses for Aboriginal prisoners are being run at Cessnock, Goulburn and Bathurst Gaols. Part-time courses are being run at Long Bay, Oberon and Grafton.

It is hoped that students attending a full-time course will be placed "on hold" in that gaol; and that permission for full-time education will be treated in the same manner as permission for working in prison industries; and that students will be able to continue their studies if they are reclassified, because TAFE runs parallel courses in maximum, medium and minimum security prisons.

General Skills, Certificate in General Education and Tertiary Preparatory Courses are offered in Bathurst, General Skills and CGE are offered at Goulburn and Cessnock.

Twenty-seven men in NSW gaols have completed a General Skills course and 50 per cent of these men have gone on to further education.

In 1987 a group of students at Bathurst gaol wrote, produced and acted in a radio play which went to air over the local radio station. Other students made videos about the AEU programs in gaol.

A small group of students have now progressed on to tertiary studies, and some of these students are tutoring other students in General Skills, CGE and TPC. Upon release these qualified students will have a much better chance of finding employment.

Chapter 29

ABORIGINES LEARNING TO TRANSLATE

by Christine Kilham
Eirlys Richards

INTRODUCTION

The translation scene in Aboriginal Australia is not exactly a new scene. Not only was some linguistic and dictionary work done last century and early this century, but some translation work as well. Some of the early European linguists and translators were learned men; some, for example, know the classical languages well, like Latin and Greek. But there were no opportunities for either the white translators nor the Aboriginal people who worked with them to do courses on how to translate, nor on the steps that were needed before translation could be done. Such steps would include working out the best way to write down a language that hadn't been written before, and working out the grammar. They had to struggle along as best they could. It wasn't till the late 1960's that tertiary courses in linguistics were widely accessible in Australia and it was not till the 1970's that an occasional translation course was held that was geared for traditional Aboriginal people.

Since that early time and in the years following there have been quite a variety of materials translated in well over 30 traditional Aboriginal languages. These include not only biblical materials such as some New Testaments, parts of the Old Testament, information on Jewish culture as a background to understanding the Bible, but also materials like a translation of the Northern Territory Traffic Guide and a council constitution booklet. Some booklets on Aboriginal oral history have been translated from another Aboriginal language. People have also translated children's stories such as the 'The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids' and 'The Lion and the Mouse'. Serious translation is currently being done in at least fifteen languages.

Over the years members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (S.I.L.) have been involved in training Aborigines who still speak their traditional languages. This has mostly been done in an informal way, on the job, and usually on a one to one basis in the communities where the members work. Since 1984, S.I.L. has been developing more formal training sessions for Aboriginal people. Initially the course developers looked closely at information available about national translator courses in other countries such as Africa, P.N.G. and India. Taking into account ideas both from this research and work that has been done on Aboriginal learning styles by people such as Harris, courses were designed and given an initial run. Subsequent courses were based on evaluations of the previous ones.

Courses have been run in a variety of places with a variety of people. After each course there is an attempt to assess, pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and plan the next course in the light of these. Certain ways of teaching and choices of setting are emerging as more helpful than others. This paper will include a brief discussion of some of these.

CHRISTINE KILHAM AND EIRLYS RICHARDS, S.I.L., P.O. Berrimah N.T. 5028

But before saying more about learning styles, it's important to describe the nature of the translation process, the development of team work and the setting up of the courses up to this point.

TRANSLATING

Translating is basically the transfer of information given in one language in written form to another also in written form. A 'good' translation will convey the same information in an understandable form from one language to another. A 'poor' translation may leave out information or be in a hard-to-understand unnatural form. Translation is indeed both an art and a science. The translator needs to be as much aware of how to says something accurately as to how to say it in a natural and flowing style.

The ease with which translation can be done will vary according to the material to be translated. An account of an everyday happening such as a hunting or fishing story or a conversation will be translated much more easily than a statement on the rationale of Australia's National language Policy. It is material similar to the latter that S.I.L. is involved in translating and it is in order to translate it well that skills of translation need to be taught. Although S.I.L.'s main focus is on training Aborigines in Bible translation, we have also translated materials such as an abridgement of the National Language Policy, how-to-vote legal matters, health information and even a document on statistics! The same translation principles are valid for each of these areas.

There are a number of skills demanded of translators. Firstly and obviously a knowledge of the two languages is needed. Ideally a thorough knowledge of them is needed so that not only can translators give equivalents of words and phrases and sentences, but also so that they know the two languages well enough to have the translation flow naturally on the level of paragraphs and discourse. For example, in Kunwinjku, a language spoken in Arnhem Land, the translator there reports that it is natural for the main characters, the time and the place of the action to be stated at the beginning of a story. Some English stories introduce some of the main characters part way through the story and may even end up by giving the time at the end almost like an aside, eg "The day that it happened was a Wednesday.". . . . If one was translating such a story into Kunwinjku, you would have to mention the day along with the place and the main characters at the beginning for the translation to flow naturally.

When there is a large gulf between the cultures of the native speakers of the two languages, therefore affecting the way they think and see the world, translation is much harder — because this is also reflected in the language. This is particularly the case between Aboriginal languages and English.

DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMWORK

It is as difficult for native English speakers to reach a level of native speaker ability in an Aboriginal language as it is for traditional Aborigines to reach a native speaker fluency level in English. (However English is becoming better known.) Therefore our translation work has always been a team effort, with all members of the team bringing their strengths to make up the 'whole' in qualifications. The S.I.L. members bring to translation the strengths of a native knowledge of English and access to background

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literature to help understand the meaning of the document to be translated. They also have had training in translation principles and linguistics. On the other hand Aboriginal translators bring to the translation their 'insider' knowledge of their language and culture and the appropriate use of it in a variety of contexts. Many traditional Aborigines have a natural ability in language and often speak several. Over the past four years we have moved towards a training program for Aboriginal translators and their non-Aboriginal counterparts to strengthen the skills of each and enhance their complementarity.

THE COURSES

In October 1986 the first of six recent workshops for training Aboriginal and Islander translators was held in Darwin. Over the past two years five more were held in regional areas, including Maningrida in the Northern Territory, Ernabella in South Australia, Yorke Island in the Torres Strait and Jigalong in Western Australia. A seventh is planned for Darwin next month.

The approach to teaching has been to take notice of Aboriginal learning styles and facilitate them where possible, for example learning by doing, learning in context, using repetition and modelling. Following is an example of learning by doing. Several Aboriginal languages do not have abstract nouns, whereas they are used frequently in English. In one case, as an introductory lesson, we gave the students a batch of English sentences containing abstract nouns, e.g.

> The decision was made by the boss.
> He has a tremendous memory.
> A knowledge of German is required.
> His fear of the dark is very strong.

Without giving any instruction on what to do, we threw the students in at the deep end. They got into language groups to try and work out how to translate these sentences into their own languages in a way that would be clear and natural. They found this challenging and interesting and learnt a lot by it. We were able to draw out the translation principles that applied at the end.

However we are conscious that the demands of translating require skills which as far as we know were not normally learned in traditional Aboriginal society. Translators needs to extend their critical thinking facilities and use them in new areas. They need to be continually anticipating their audience's reactions to the translation. They need to stand back from what they have done and assess it in terms of audience reaction and be prepared to revise it accordingly. They may need to think of other possibilities for making the translation clearer. They may have conveyed the correct meaning but made their sentence too complicated so that the readers can't take it in. Good translators would then rewrite the material possible using a number of shorter sentences. For example, not all languages have the same joining words, nor do they join sentences in all the same way or in the same order. If translators didn't think carefully about this, they might end up with a sentence like:

> John went fishing so Jack went fishing too, but they caught nothing, even though they fished all day with their stomachs rumbling from hunger all the time and their heads aching viciously from the hot sun.

Translators would need to think carefully whether this sentence was too 'crowded and too 'heavy' for their audience. If so they would have to rewrite it, maybe something like the following:

> John went fishing so Jack went too. They fished all day, and all the time their stomachs rumbled from hunger and their heads ached viciously from the hot sun. But they caught nothing.

Here there are three sentences instead of one, and also the structure is less 'heaped up' — it is 'loosened' and made easier to understand.

They also need to stand back and read the whole chunk of their translation to see whether the right focus is coming through. Sometimes a concept has to be translated which is not part of Aboriginal culture. A descriptive phrase or sentence may have to be used to convey that concept. In these cases it is easy for the main focus to be lost. A sensitive translator will keep these things in balance. These things are not easily learned but as a result of the on site training and courses a growing number of Aboriginal translators are developing some of these skills of discernment and critical evaluation in their translation work.

We have found that our course are more effective when:

1. the principles of translation were presented as the students needed them, as problems arose in the translating task. It was not as helpful learning principles in one session then applying them to the task in another.
2. the planned information load was comfortable
3. the instruction was either given in the vernacular or, if in English, there were regular slots of time set aside for discussion in the vernacular.
4. the English speaking translators weren't in overwhelming numbers in the same group receiving instruction. The most helpful composition was when there was balance of Aboriginal translators and their white counterparts learning together.
5. when the workshops were regional, that is, the group was small and not representing Aborigines from greatly distant areas. This meant that the languages were more similar in structure and therefore more similar in how they handled translation. Also there is more likely to be a relational network between the groups for ease of interaction.
6. there was the stimulation of some Aboriginal translators of other language groups involved. It gave a 'we together' feeling. However, having a session with only one language group in their home territory can be effective also — but these seem to work best if the white translator in the area is very fluent and can teach linguistic and translation concepts in the vernacular, and also if an outside consultant comes in as a resource person and provides extra stimulation. But it is necessary to be flexible when courses are held on home territory eg staff may need to be prepared to share informally in a home setting, rather than in a more formal setting.
7. other Aborigines of the community (not translators) were invited to open sessions to observe what was involved in translating, giving status to the translation work and giving others opportunity to understand the task.

8. natural Aboriginal ability in drama was used to introduce teaching points. For example, when teaching figures of speech, similes were acted out to emphasise that the meaning was not often what it appeared to be.
9. well chosen videos, films depicting people of other cultures involved in translating were shown.
10. personal relationships between teachers and students were good. This was more important than the way the material was presented.

Following is an example from point 8 on how drama was used. In an introductory lesson on similes and metaphors, several plates of cornflakes were put on a table. Students were then asked to think of any kind of bird they wished, eg brolga, chook, owl, ibis, and then to take turns at acting out how that bird would eat, bringing out any characteristics they wished. The class roared laughing as various members of the group flew in flapping their wings, quick jerky assaults on the food, looked all around while they ate, squawked and shrieked and generally made a mess with the cornflakes flying everywhere. None ate much. At the end of the drama, the teacher explained how there are many ways of eating like a bird, but when we use that expression in English we only have in mind one way a person might eat like a bird ie that he eats only a small amount. So it is important that when a simile is translated from one language to another that the audience understand the point being made. This teaching point made much more sense when following on directly from the drama.

Our courses were less effective when:

1. concepts were taught in a straight lecture style
2. too much information was given at one sitting
3. information was not related to the task in hand, eg the translation principle was taught out of context
4. workshops included people with a wide range of knowledge of English. It was difficult to know at what level to pitch the teaching.
5. the proportion of native English speakers was large and they were vocal
6. workshops included large groups from diverse places. There was time needed to get to know one another before it became and learning environment.

Implications

The implications of these observations are that we are moving more towards teaching people to translate through hands on experience. The trainee translator attempts to translate the text, then when problems arise the necessary skill is taught. There is still a place for more fomalised instruction, for example in the explaining of the meaning and background of the English passage to be translated. But rather than present them in straight lecture form we are using video, film, photos, maps or other visual aids as well as activities such as drama to enhance the learning. In cases where verbal teaching cannot be avoided, we have found it helpful to break this up into 10-15 minutes chunks and allow time for discussion and explanation in the language before going on with the next teaching chunk. Lastly we have found it best to hold regional workshops when at all possible because the inspiration of learning with others who are translating in their languages is very important.

Finally, we must stress we still have lots to learn about this whole area. That is the reason why every workshop we have so far held has been unique — as we attempt to learn from the last workshop and improve the next.

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Chapter 30

LEFT OR RIGHT BRAIN: IS THERE A NEUROLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP TO TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL LEARNING STYLES?

by Barbara Sayers

Introduction

One day I was discussing with one of my Aboriginal friends the differences between 'Western' and 'Aboriginal' world view we were planning to write a paper together. When I explained some of the ways Westerners think she exclaimed in amazement, 'Do you really think like that?'. It was good to understand each other better because what we know, how we know it and why we believe it are very different in the two cultures.

The purpose of this paper is to look at these differences from one perspective-that of the organisation of the human brain and the very different ways of thinking used by each hemisphere in it.

THE LEFT-RIGHT BRAIN MODEL

In the past twenty years, the description of the brain's activity in terms of right hemisphere and left hemisphere has become well known. From medical records of people suffering brain damage, it was observed that loss of speech capability occurred more frequently when damage was to the left hemisphere than it did when the damage was to the right hemisphere.

Extensive research has since been done, especially on patients who have had the corpus callosum, the linking nerve connection between the two hemispheres, severed in cases of intractible epilepsy. Experiments with these 'split brain' patients have shown that the left hemisphere perceives in a different way from the right one, and each hemisphere processes data in its own way. When the corpus collosum is intact, information is passed across this link and 'unified'; thus a person is not normally aware that different parts of his brain may be functioning differently.

There is disagreement among researchers as to how distinct the two hemispheres are in their functions, and much is still not known about individual variation in brain organisation. It is important to remember that no brain activity is completely centred in one hemisphere but that one hemisphere has primary control 'and whatever contribution the opposite hemisphere may make is secondary, or minor, or perhaps that it is crude, weak, or even inhibited or suppressed by the role played by the primary hemisphere in the action or function in question' (Thompson 1984:101).

I became interested in the relationship between the left and right brain while attending language learning seminars given by Tom and Betty Brewster in 1985. One of their insights was that successful language learning is a right-brain activity because it is a social rather than an academic and analytical activity. (See Brewster and Brewster 1981). It is the experience of many people that they have learned a lot about another language without being able to speak it; this is left mode learning. There are others

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who speak a language accurately without being able to explain anything about the grammar; these are right-mode learners. In language learning, one or the other of these modes of learning is usually to the fore. Many 'Westerners' or 'Whites' learn languages mostly by the left mode and as a result don't usually become really fluent. On the other hand, many of my Aboriginal friends speak a number of languages well-and have never analysed a single word. The Brewsters also pointed out that most of us in western cultures are dominated by the learning style of the left brain and therefore find any right-brain activities difficult, particularly in adulthood. My observation of Aboriginal people I know shows that many of them are dominated by right-mode thinking and as a result find left-mode activities more difficult.

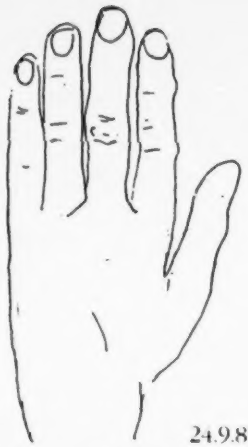
During the seminars the Brewsters quoted and used examples from a book by Betty Edwards, 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain'. Edwards cites evidence from neurological work with 'split-brain' patients and states: 'We now know that despite our normal feelings that we are one person-a single being-our brains are double, each half with its own way of knowing, its own way of perceiving external reality. In a manner of speaking, each of us has two minds, two consciences, mediated and integrated by the connecting cable of nerve fibres between the hemispheres' (1979:31).

Edwards also gives some interesting descriptions about the way the two halves of the brain function (1979:32):

> Sometimes they co-operate, each half taking on the particular part of the task that is suited to its mode of information processing. At other times the hemispheres can work singly, with one half 'on' and the other half more or less 'off'. It seems also that the hemispheres may also conflict, one half attempting to do what the other half 'knows' it can do better. Furthermore, it may be that each hemisphere has a way of keeping knowledge from the other hemisphere. It may be, as the saying goes, that the right hand truly does not know what the left hand is doing.

Edwards relates these descriptions of the brain hemispheres to the process of learning how to draw. She explains that it is the right hemisphere that needs to process the information for a person to be able to perceive an object in a manner that allows its accurate reproduction. The left hemisphere's mode of knowing what to draw seems to interfere with the visual perception needed to draw well. The left mode imposes symbolic and verbal input with disastrous results. That is, it 'knows' the symbol for drawing a particular object and is impatient with the right mode's slow, deliberate observation. It tries to speed up the drawing process by imposing the more symbolic form.

I followed Edwards' instruction for making the shift from the left mode to the right mode in drawing. These instructions include drawing reverse images, copying line drawings upside down, and drawing behind your back while carefully observing an object such as you own hand. As I did these exercises, I was amazed at the depth of perspective and the detail I could see as I made the shift. I also experience a sense of timelessness as I became engrossed in my drawing. To give an idea of the results that can be obtained, which Edwards links to the shift from left to right brain activity, I have included my own initial drawing of my hand, then the hand drawn a few days later, after following the instructions. Although the latter hand drawing is in a more complex position, there is an obvious difference in the quality of the two drawings.



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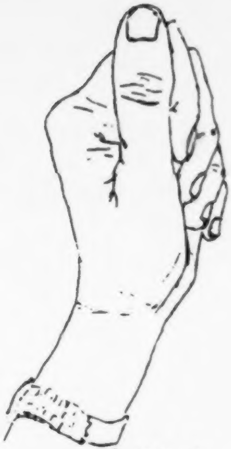

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THE LEFT-RIGHT BRAIN MODEL AND ABORIGINAL LEARNING STYLES

My above-related experience in drawing, added to my previous experiences in language learning, increased my interest in the theory of left-brain and right brain differences. Edwards' book includes a table comparing the characteristics of left and right brain activities. As I read these comparisons, I found they related to another area of my experience, that of living and working with Aboriginal people, primarily the Wik Mungkan people of Aurukun, North Queensland. Edwards' table of comparisons is reproduced below. I will look at the comparisons (two of which I have modified) in terms of the differences in Aboriginal and western ways of knowing and ways of learning, illustrating with examples from my own or others' experiences and citing linguistic and other findings regarding Aboriginal learning styles.

A Comparison of Left-Mode and Right-Mode Characteristics

L-MODE	R-MODE
Verbal: Using words to name describe, define.	**Nonverbal**: Awareness of things, but minimal connection with words.
Analytic: Figuring things out step-by-step and part-by-part.	**Synthetic**: Putting things together to form wholes.
Symbolic: Using a symbol to 'stand for' something. For example, the drawn form 👁 stands for 'eye', the sign + stands for the process of addition.	**Concrete**: Relating to things as are, at the present moment.
Abstract: Taking out a small bit of information and using it to represent the whole thing.	**Analogic**: Seeing likenesses between things, understanding metaphoric relationships.
Temporal: Keeping track of time, sequencing one thing after another: Doing first things first, second thing second, etc.	**Non-temporal**: Without a sense of time.

L-MODE	R MODE
Rational: Drawing conclusions based on 'reason and facts'.	**Non-rational**: Not requiring a basis of reason or facts; willingness to suspend judgement.
Digital: Using numbers as in counting.	**Spatial**: Seeing where things are in relation to other things, and how parts go together to form a whole.
Logical: Drawing conclusions based on logic: one thing following another in logical order — for example, a mathematical theorem or a well stated argument.	**Intuitive**: Making leaps of insight, often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings, or visual images.
Linear:Thinking in terms of linked ideas, one thought directly following another, often leading to a convergent conclusion.	**Holistic**: Seeing whole things all at once; perceiving the overall patterns and structures, often leading to divergent conclusions.

1. VERBAL VS NONVERBAL

> While trying to help a small Wik-Mungkan child put on a pair of sandals, I was continually verbalising instructions to her. Her grandmother protested, insisting that she was 'just a child' and that it was useless telling her what to do. She was kon-thaa' way yippak 'ear-mouth-bad still' which means 'unable to learn'. Young people may be referred to this way even up to the age of puberty when they are expected to take learning seriously as in initiation.

Aboriginal learning style has been well documented by Harris (1980) and Christie (1984). Aboriginal children learn by observation and trial and error copying. The child learns if and when he wants to, without coercion. This learning style, in which the child is aware, often keenly so, of all that is going on, is not accompanied by verbalisation by the adult being observed, and frequently the learner asks no questions. Graham (1980) and Harris (1984) both make repeated statements of the need to teach Aboriginal children to verbalise if they are to succeed in western education. My experience with Wik-Mungkan adults has shown that much the same style is still used.

A woman I was helping to make a dress brought it back to me for fitting. It needed some alterations which I helped her prepare to make — but instead of taking it home and doing the alterations she threw the dress in the bin on the way out.

The teenage boys did the same thing with woodwork at the Trade School as soon as they made a mistake. The teacher and I were equally surprised by these actions, but at that time we were not aware of the traditional way of learning. We didn't know that a person would make an item up to when he marred it and then begin again on a new one until he could perfect it in one go. There was no place for practicing or patching up on the way. It was a long time before I understood the woman's actions. She had marred the dress and needed to start again.

I heard recently of an Aboriginal man who had carefully observed the pilot of a small plane. One day, to the pilot's surprise, the man took the plane and flew it himself. On a less dramatic scale, learning to drive a vehicle or learning to run an outboard motor, or even use the duplicator are all done the same way.

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The problem with learning this way is that all the contingencies may not have been observed such as how to change from one fuel tank to another when flying a plane. Oral instruction can handle this sort of information. For example, 'If the left fuel tank gets low, switch it over to the right one like this'.

2. ANALYTIC VS SYNTHETIC

An Aboriginal man in the Western Desert was ill and had wandered away from the camp and become lost. He was of the kangaroo totem. Others in the community were told not to shoot kangaroos as 'it could be our brother'.

The Aboriginal system of totems is a synthetic view of the world. The traditional Aboriginal sees unity or synthesis in the totem, of which he is just one of the representations. Other representations are the animal, the sacred site, the songs and body painting associated with the ceremony There Aboriginal does not question how this can be true; he accepts what he has been taught such as that there is a 'syntheses' or 'unity' of things even animate and inanimate. He performs the ceremonies the traditional way because 'that's the way we do it'. He does not analyse what he has been told, nor does he attempt to rationalise his beliefs. Many times when I was told 'that's the way we do it' I thought people were not telling me the 'real' reason. It took me a long time to realise that such a statement was a real reason. 'The way things are' does not need analysis, proof or comment.

In some Aboriginal myths the language shows that the man and the animals are seen as the same. For example, complex subjects are used such as 'the man, the flying fox he . . .' The storyline is lost for the westerner when this type of construction occurs, as in Wik-Mungkan. Graber (1987:210-211) has an example of the same phenomenon in Kriol, a recent contact language.

3. SYMBOLIC VS CONCRETE

Aboriginal art is considered by westerners to be symbolic. However, the Aboriginal artist describes his work in such statements as: 'The circles are __________' 'the dots are __________'. While these metaphorical statements can reflect symbolic relationships, in the Aboriginal mind there is also a sense in which these symbols are understood not just as representations but as the actual things themselves. Therefore, his art is concrete as it relates to 'things as they are'. Though this 'concrete' view is not understood by most westerners, yet it is akin to the viewpoint of those in churches where the bread and wine of communion or mass are believed to become the actual body and blood of Christ. For other Christians, the bread and wine are only symbols of the body and blood. (See Bain 1979:259-287 for a detailed discussion of 'unity' in Aboriginal thought).

4. ABSTRACT VS CONCRETE[1]

I called out to a child taking my bike, 'Don't take my bike. Taking bikes is wrong'. Instantly an Aboriginal woman called to the child, 'Don't take Barbara's bike; she gets mad'.

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[1] In this section I have chosen to compare Abstract and Concrete. Here I have taken Abstract to mean a more general principle extracted from an event and Concrete to apply to a real life event.

> The young Aboriginal twins would not go with their mother. Her verbal attempts to persuade them failed. Then their uncle covered himself with a sail and approached the twins. They ran to their mother screaming 'ghost, ghost!'. His concrete and frightening approached worked very well.

Both of these examples illustrate concrete approaches to problems. My response to the 'borrowing' of my bike was a typical western one using abstract moral principles. I had taken one incident and related it to 'taking' bikes in general. The Aboriginal woman perceived the same situation in terms of that particular incident alone. She assumed taking by bike would make me angry so warned the child appropriately. Abstract thinking allows for generalisations like my one about 'taking bikes'. Concrete thinking is tied to the actual incident which makes it difficult to generalise. In the second example, the 'realness' of the 'ghost' was more effective than verbal arguments or threats.

5. TEMPORAL VS NON-TEMPORAL

> A staff member was concerned that the church bell had not rung for the service one damp overcast morning. When she couldn't find anyone to ring it, she did it herself. After waiting impatiently for the people to come, she went ahead and started the service. The people were upset, and wondered why she started without them. Of course everyone would sleep late on such a dark morning and the service would just start later. They would have rung the bell when they were ready; that was no problem.

When I am working alone, I as a westerner keep time and live by the clock. When I am working with Aboriginal people I try to be more flexible. Because Aboriginal people place little value on time, many westerners with whom they interact become frustrated. In Aboriginal culture, actually doing the thing, such as the church service, is far more important than doing it at a particular time. Aboriginal people often do not know how to interpret a white person's rush to do things and may link it with 'being greedy' or seeking monetary reward.

6. REASONING FROM POSSIBILITY VS REASONING FROM FACT[2]

> An Aboriginal man was taking a vehicle over the river for cattle work. The white mechanic said to him, 'If the oil is low, pour some more in'. The Aboriginal man took this as a statement of fact: 'The oil is low. Pour more in'. He did what he thought he as told to do daily for a few days, seemingly without question, until the oil was used up and then came back to the very surprised mechanic for more oil. This Aboriginal man learned to understand this kind of instruction later on.

The problem here is twofold. One problem is that of a very different world view, particularly about the things that could happen in the future. The other problem is a linguistic one.

Aboriginal people talk about what they are going to do in terms of facts — and they need to know that it is a fact. They also reason from things they believe are facts. But which others might not — such as myths. They also talk about things that have happened or might happen from revelation such as dreams. And dreams are a major source for reasoning. Four months of living with two Wik-Mungkan women at a workshop in Papua New Guinea in 1970 taught me the importance of dreams.

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[2] I have chosen to compare 'reasoning from possibility versus Reasoning from fact' because I believe this best describes the different between western and Aboriginal thinking processes.

Westerners seldom take dreams seriously and so discount a valid source of Aboriginal knowledge. As well as this, westerners do something that many Wik-Mungkan people find hard to understand. They reason from mere ideas. This is why the mechanic and the Aboriginal man had such a problem talking about putting oil in the engine.

Firstly, the mechanic gave an instruction assuming something needed to be checked before any action was taken-but he didn't say it. He had two ideas in his head. 1. Maybe the oil would be okay. 2. Maybe the oil would be low. But he didn't know which the Aboriginal man would find when he looked. The second problem was that he only gave one of the two alternatives. What the Aboriginal man needed to do was to look so that he could decide which alternative to act on. What he did should have been based on what he found out when checking out the two ideas or possibilities.

However, the man did the only thing he knew to do. He took the one thing that was said and assumed it was a fact and then he did what he understood was a direct instruction. He misinterpreted what was said as 'The oil is low-pour some in'.

Once Aboriginal people understand how we westerners reason-and many do-they often borrow the English word if and use it to introduce a future conditional: 'If ______ then ______'. The Wik-Mungkan language does have a form that can be used for future conditionals, but past conditionals are more often used because they are based on known facts. The following are two examples taken from Wik-Mungkan texts:

> Had he come, I'd have gone.
>
> Had they been husband and wife, I'd have killed the man and kept the woman as my wife.

Both of these conditional sentences imply facts known to the speaker. The first implies he didn't come-that's why I didn't go. In the second, the implication is the the two were not husband and wife — so he couldn't kill the husband.

The difference between reasoning from facts with implications and reasoning from ideas where nothing is implied is a major one. The misunderstanding of the second type of conditional has caused many communication breakdowns between Aboriginal and white people.

I have tried various ways to presenting the nothing-implied conditional statements in Wik-Mungkan, including such a full statement as , 'Maybe he will come, maybe he won't come. (If) he comes, I will go. (If) he doesn't come, I won't go.' This statement can be understood as a conditional by the more sophisticated and educated, but it still causes problems for others.

7. DIGITAL VS SPATIAL

When an Aboriginal stockman asked me to buy him a pair of boots in Cairns, I asked for his size. He didn't know what shoe sizes were so he couldn't tell me. Another Aboriginal could have bought the man the right size boots without any problem, but I couldn't.

> The same Aboriginal stockman was reporting some missing cattle. When asked how many, he responded 'Maybe twenty, maybe two hundred'. This man didn't think in terms of numbers but was able to tell which cattle were missing and give further details a white stockman couldn't — which was very helpful in the situation.

Aboriginal people shop with great success by using spatial perception, rather than memorising number sizes. I was given a dress by an Aboriginal friend who had looked at the dress and related it to her knowledge of what I looked like. She didn't know or care about my 'size' but the dress fitted perfectly.

As the example about cattle illustrates, in traditional Aboriginal culture, items were seen individually, a unique entities, and therefore generalisations were not easily made. The introduction of mass-produced items has enabled some Aboriginal people to generalise about, for example, boxes of matches or packets of tea. Once this is done, numbers can be abstracted and the concept of numbering understood (see Sayers 1982 and 1983).

Pam Harris (1980) and May Laughren (1978) have documented the Aboriginal child's superiority in handling directional and spatial material at an early age. These skills can be used in an Aboriginal community to show how clever a child is in much the same way as a European child's skill in counting is used. Graham (1984) also carefully documents the Aboriginal child's skills in meaningful classification and extensive understanding of spatial relationships.

8. LOGICAL VS INTUITIVE

> The hospital window was broken and I wondered who had done it. A passer by looked at the window and not only told me which child had broken it, but also that he had been running when he threw the rock. It was interesting to me that the women always examined a new baby's feet and were very quick to point out likenesses to family members. On one occasion they used this method to establish a child's paternity.
>
> I stopped to look at a snake track across the road. 'Where did the snake go?' I asked. 'That way' was the response. 'How do you know?' The answer was, 'See, see'.

The Aboriginal's perceptual skills are well recognised, particularly in tracking when it appears he gets his clues from incomplete patterns. He does not explain how he knows by logical deduction but simply by telling the observer to 'look'. I can 'look' but I don't recognise what I'm supposed to see.

There are examples from linguistics which show the minimal use of logical connection in Aboriginal languages (Hudson 1970, Marsh 1970, Sayers 1976, 1986). Argumentation is often by a statement of fact followed by observations about it or comments upon it. No overt conclusion is given. The observations about the statement are frequently given in the form of binary statements or the opposition of one idea with another such as the following positive/negative ones: 'It's not big; it's very small' or 'It's not only for one; they share it with everybody'. Logical conjunctions are not just absent, there is no place in such constructions for them. Logical conjunctions may string together a whole series of points rather than just opposing two.

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9. LINEAR VS HOLISTIC

> A man looked at a tree, said it had water in it, chopped into it and the water ran out. His explanation as to how he knew water was there was 'Look and see'. A young man tried the same procedure on another tree without success. The older man simply explained again by 'look and see' which in western terms would mean 'learn by observation'.

I would have had the same problem as the Aboriginal young man in this example, cited in Huttar (1977:24). I don't know how the older man knew there was water in one tree but not in another. I would have needed a logical explanation with specific signs to observe which would lead me step by step to the conclusion-a kind of cause and effect chain. But the experienced Aboriginal man saw the situation in a holistic way, recognising the overall picture and coming to the right conclusion. Many of us non-Aborigines have been amazed by such perceptual skills. However, in driving a car, and in many other areas of daily life we all operate on the basis of perception. For example, I don't need to understand anything about physics to know when to turn the wheel, take my foot off the accelerator or apply the brakes when turning into a narrow drive. And I can quickly adjust from one size car to another. A logical or linear thinking approach to learning many such skills would be counter productive and 'illogical'.

Many more examples, both personal and from the literature, could be given of the differences in Aboriginal and western learning styles. My point is to relate Aboriginal styles of thinking and learning to the hemisphere view of the brain. It seems clear to me that Aboriginal people use predominantly right-mode thinking. This in no way implies any lack of intelligence. Both hemispheres of the brain are capable of marvellous things, but 'the right hemisphere is not under very good verbal control and is not used for making logical propositions' (Edwards 1979:36).

RIGHT-MODE THINKING AND COGNITIVE RESEARCH

Looking at the chart Edwards has provided and relating the features of thinking of each mode to what some psychologists say, it seems to me that the features of the left mode characterise what is usually called by psychologists the Formal-Operational mode of cognition. The features of the right mode of thinking relate much more to the Concrete-Operational mode as well as to some aspects of Pre-Operational thought.

The basis for reasoning in traditional Aboriginal culture stems from his world view and his dependence on known and experienced facts. The traditional Aboriginal person had little need to use operational thought, or the left mode of thinking. This does not mean that he was unable to develop it, but it says that his background simply did not require it. To achieve the shift to the left mode the Aboriginal has to stop relying on perception, known and experienced facts and revelation as the only bases for reasoning. Once he is able to do this, he can reason from facts and from ideas as well. In this way left-mode thinking, or formal operational thought, can be used. Many Aboriginal people have become left-mode thinkers and use this mode when appropriate.

AREAS NEEDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

As I have struggled to shift into the right-mode of thinking so that my perceptual skills are increased and I can 'see' well enough to draw well, I wonder wht can be done to help Aboriginal people develop skills associated with left-mode thinking.

A number of ideas come to mind. The first is teaching to hypothesise from real-life experiences in preference to a formal classroom situation which may not be perceived as 'real'. For example, the experience of the outboard motor running out of fuel today, or some other real experience the people have had and the problems it caused, could be talked about in terms of how it could have been avoided. Then questions could be developed to talk about the possibility of the same thing happening tomorrow. From one real life event many other situations could be talked about the same way. The ideas expressed in conditional sentences need to be talked about until it is clear they are just ideas and not facts. For example, when I say, 'If I go to Cairns next week . . .' I need to make it clear that I might go and I might not and that I don't know yet. It is only after this is clear that I can move on to the alternatives I want to offer if I go.

Another area I feel needs careful examination is the language used to a child by the mother or other child caretaker in the early days of the child's development-both before he learns to speak and as he does. I believe some significant differences would emerge when, for example, comparing the language used by a white/westerner mother to her child and an Aboriginal mother to hers.

Immediately comes to mind my hearing an Aboriginal grandmother giving a small child detailed instructions about what to call various relatives and what they would call her. As well, the grandmother outlined obligations and appropriate behaviour for the child to take. This kind of information is passed on to the child over and over again until she knows who is who and how she is expected to behave.

In contrast to this, in my family, I have observed the young mothers giving a lot of verbal instruction to their children but it's been quite different. It usually includes reasons why the child should behave the way the mother wants. For example, 'If you go outside without your shoes you'll get a cold'. 'If you want me to take you shopping this afternoon, pick up your toys'. 'Why don't you go out to Grandma in the kitchen. She might have something for you'.

Some detailed 'diary' studies of real Aboriginal situations would be very helpful. As well as learning how to talk, the child learns what is appropriate to say. The Aboriginal child learns about kin, the white child to question everything, 'Why, Mummy, why?'.

My hypothesis is that many white children are born into an environment where left-mode thinking is used in interaction with them-long before they can use that sort of language themselves. I continue to hypothesise that many Aboriginal children are born into an environment where primary focus is on 'who's who' and how to behave in a real life situation, not a hypothetical one.

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Chapter 31

WHOSE IDEOLOGY?: ADULT ABORIGINAL ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION ON THE CARNARVON ABORIGINAL RESERVE

by Sherry Saggers
Dennis Gray

Since 1972 successive Federal Governments have pursued the policies of self-determination or self-management in Aboriginal affairs. Implicit in these policies has been an ideological commitment to the notion of increased Aboriginal autonomy. These policies reflect aspirations in Aboriginal communities. However, quite apart from the ambivalence in the wider community, the policies neglect differences both within the non-Aboriginal bureaucratic structures concerned with Aboriginal affairs and in Aboriginal groups themselves. To the extent they influence action, idealogical differences in this area have implications for the establishment of sustainable autonomous Aboriginal institutions. Ideologies are often in conflict with social structural realities. In particular, the policy of self-management disregards the dependence of Aboriginal groups on wider, non-Aboriginal socio-economic structures.

The literature on Aborigines has highlighted a continuity of traditional values and idealogies in contemporary life (Kolig 1977; Tonkinson 1970, 1974). In addition, non-Aboriginal elements have been incorporated into the traditional ideological domain (Tonkinson 1974). Despite this syncretism, however, there is evidence from many communities of a clear separation of 'blackfella' and 'whitefella' domains, with the former being largely concerned with the maintenance and revival of Aboriginal Law (Akerman 1979, Gray 1977, Sackett 1978, Tonkinson 1978, 1982). On the other hand, there has been a perceived reluctance by Aborigines to assume responsibility for the 'whitefella' domain. This has been presented as a major difficulty for the implementation of the Government's self-management policy.

The conflict of ideology between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and even within Aboriginal communities has implications for Aboriginal education. Complications arise especially in those communities where contact with non-Aboriginal people is unavoidable. Unlike remote Aboriginal communities, The Carnarvon Reserve Mob was not able to 'go it alone' as their physical proximity to a major rural town made them more vulnerable to the implicitly assimilationalist policies of various government departments. This paper examines the issue of conflicting ideas about education in the context of the Carnarvon Reserve Mob's attempt to improve educational opportunities for their children.

SHERRY SAGGERS, Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies,
Western Australian College of Advanced Education, P.O. Box 66, MT LAWLEY W.A. 6050
DENNIS GRAY, Community Health Research & Training Unit,
University of Western Australia, CRAWLEY W.A. 6009

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CARNARVON RESERVE

The town of Carnarvon is located on the coast of Western Australia one thousand kilometres north of Perth. It has a population of approximately 7,500 people of whom 1,500 are Aborigines. The wider Aboriginal population of Carnarvon and the distinct groupings within it have been described by Dagmar (1978a, 1978b, 1983-4). The Carnarvon Aboriginal Reserve was located about three kilometres to the east of the town on the banks of the Gascoyne river. The Carnarvon Reserve Mob was made up of about three hundred individuals of whom at any one time approximately one hundred and fifty were in residence on the Reserve itself. The remainder could be found either working on pastoral stations to the north and east or visiting relatives in towns such as Onslow and Meekatharra.

The Reserve people were the most culturally conservative of the Aborigines residing in Carnarvon. Many had only moved permanently to the town from the stations following the awarding of equal wages in the pastoral industry in the late 1960's. Although their ancestors had been in contact with Europeans for about one hundred years and economically they were dependent upon the pastoral industry, the Reserve Mob had retained some key elements of Aboriginal traditions (Gray 1976, 1978, 1979). As a community they had struggled both to maintain a more-or-less separate Aboriginal identity and to improve their standard of living.

ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION

Among the adults on the Reserve there existed a variety of attitudes to formal education which cut across all sections of the Mob. Many of the older people-who themselves had no formal education-were often the most vocal in enjoining the children to attend school. Although believing that education could lead to material rewards and status within the wider community, their awareness of educational processes within the school system and the mechanisms of social mobility was rather limited. Among some of these older people and the middle aged initiated men, there was also the view that the schools should impart some knowledge of Aboriginal culture. There was a precedent for this in that two of the men had taught children in the Special Projects Class at Carnarvon High School to make traditional artefacts. This was viewed as a small step in the right direction. However, the way in which other cultural elements might be integrated into the curriculum had not been thought out except in the vaguest of terms. It was people partisan to these views who censured some of the younger people who had accepted the values and beliefs acquired through the education system and who had drifted away from the Mob.

Others within the Mob acknowledged the importance of education within the wider society but also recognised that there were factors other than education involved in 'getting on' in the world. These people-having gained little material benefit from their own education-believed that formal schooling was largely a waste of time. This attitude was reinforced by two factors: the general lack of employment opportunities and the minimal educational requirements for what was regarded as the most prestigious form of employment-station work. Parents recognised that there was a need for their children to acquire some basic education but the attitude that they themselves had survived with no more than a minimum was often passed on to the children.

Another set of attitudes cut across those described above. Some of the children had committed minor acts of vandalism and theft. These acts often occurred while the children were playing truant and, for the parent or those responsible for the children, occasioned negative interactions with the police and officers of the Departments of Education and Community Welfare (as it then was). To the Reserve people the children's behaviour in itself was of little more than nuisance value as, for example, when the public telephone on the Reserve was broken. Under these circumstances, as the behaviour was regarded negatively by the wider society, it was deemed that school was the most appropriate setting to discipline the children. Thus the people attempted to ensure the children's regular attendance at school to minimise pressures from officialdom. In this respect, there are important parallels with the situation at Jigalong described by Tonkinson (1982).

Furthermore, in conversation with government officials, many of the Reserve people expressed more positive attitudes towards formal education than they actually held. This was for two reasons. Some told officials what they 'knew' the officials wanted to hear in order to hasten their departure. Others, believing that generally non Aborigines value education, expressed similar views to gain and maintain friendly relations with those people.

Among the younger children there was enthusiasm for the new experience of school. However, as they grew older this enthusiasm dwindled. The stress on punctuality and the standard of discipline enforced at the school stood in stark contrast to the permissive attitudes (by European standards) of the parents. The curriculum also had little relevance to the children's everyday life. Additionally the Reserve children were much less divorced from the life of adults than were the non-Aboriginal children. Consquently, while not generally as advanced academically as their classmates, the Reserve children were more socially mature. To some extent this alienated them from the other children and from the school itself. This trend was exacerbated by the racism exhibited by non-Aboriginal children. In the lower school grades it was common to see Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children playing together but as they grew older the non-Aboriginal children adopted the racist attitudes common in the town and increasingly shunned their Aboriginal classmates. These factors manifested themselves in a high truancy rate among the Reserve children. This is not to say, however, that the Reserve children were adverse to school and education 'per se'. While playing truant, many of the children attended the kindergarten classes which were held in the Reserve hall and were keen to participate in the activities in that less formally structured setting. This placed the kindergarten staff in an awkward position. They did not wish to appear to be encouraging such attendance but felt that they should attempt to cater for the truants.

Despite the ambivalence and diversity of attitudes towards education, it is possible to state that generally the Reserve people believed that an elementary education was necessary for their children. In addition some felt that schools should impart some knowledge of Aboriginal culture to the children though few had attempted to clarify the means by which this could or should be done.

THE RESERVE SCHOOL

The establishment of an Aboriginal school on the Carnarvon Reserve in 1977 did not occur in an historical vacuum. In the preceding ten years or so, a succession of

Aboriginal organizations had concerned themselves with the education of the Reserve children. The activities of these organisations included homework classes on the Reserve and, in 1966, the establishment of a kindergarten. The kindergarten was extremely successful. By the mid-1970's it had expanded to also cater for non-Reserve children, obtained funds for a new building off the Reserve, and was maintaining an annexe on the Reserve. During this same period, an organisation of the Reserve people also concerned itself with matters pertaining to education. At its meetings discussion often centred on the problem of truancy and some minor action was taken to alleviate this.

Also pertinent to the establishment of the school was sporadic debate among some older members of the Mob about broader educational concerns. This centred on the maintenance of Aboriginal traditions-the Law. Both sides in this debate started from the premise that the Law was important. On one side, however, were those who believed that the young people were 'cheeky' and unworthy and should be left to go their own way. On the other were those who believed that the people must take positive action to teach and guide the young and saw the schools as a potential vehicle for this.

In late 1976 truancy among the children becoming an increasing problem for both the staff at East Carnarvon Primary School and the children's parents. The headmaster at the school was aware that the education system was not relevant to the daily lives of the Aboriginal children. Consequently, he sought aid from the Disadvantaged Schools Commission, to develop a programme which would attract the children to the school. The headmaster put his proposal to the Koorda Club (kurta = elder brother)-an organisation purporting to represent all Aborigines in Carnarvon, but in the mid-1970's largely dominated by the Reserve people. However, some members of the Koorda Club's Executive Committee had reservations about the development of the programme at East Carnarvon School. They feared that a special programme might be used to take Aboriginal children who were considered to be a 'problem' out of the mainstream of education but provide them with no viable alternative approach. These Committee members and a European woman who had had a long association with the Reserve people expressed their concern to the Mob as a whole. In the weeks that followed, the proposal and some alternatives were freely discussed. One option, a vague idea for the establishment of a separate school along the lines of the kindergarten, had been around for some years and at this time gained wide acceptance.

In November 1976 a meeting was held to discuss the East Carnarvon headmaster's proposal. This meeting was attended by approximately forty adults. On the day of the meeting a small party of visitors from Strelley arrived at the Reserve. Two of these visitors addressed the meeting and extolled the virtues of the Aboriginal school at Strelley. This helped to sway the meeting which came out in favour of establishing an independant school on the Reserve. The members of the Executive committee and the European woman who was also a teacher were then asked to take the matter up on the Mob's behalf.

Initially, those organising the school hoped that rather than 'going it alone' they could work with the East Carnarvon Primary School. To this end they proposed that the Primary School establish an annexe on the Reserve. They believed this would more readily meet the needs of the children and that the project could be funded by the Disadvantaged Schools Commission. However, they were told by the Superintendent of Aboriginal Education that, as a matter of policy, the Education Department would not set up an annexe on the Reserve. He suggested that the Koorda Club write to the Minister of Education with their request and said that if the Minister refused it would be possible for the Koorda Club to establish an independent school.

At the beginning of the 1977 academic year the Koorda Club forwarded a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that a school be established on the Reserve. That letter was signed by approximately one hundred Reserve people. On the 16th March the Minister acknowledged receipt of the letter and promised to look into the matter. However, no further correspondence from him was forthcoming. In the meantime a new headmaster had been appointed to the East Carnarvon Primary School and with the secretary of the Koorda Club he briefly visited the Reserve and spoke to some of the parents. He believed that something should be done for the Reserve children but that it should be done by the Education Department and warned the Koorda Club Executive of the difficulties of establishing an independent school. The matter remained unresolved until the end of April when the Executive Committee, the European teacher and some of the parents decided to go ahead and open an independent school on the first day of the Education Department's second term. The Reserve school opened on the 30 May in a bough shed which had been constructed by the children and some of the men. The opening was auspicious and the response of the children enthusiastic even among those whom the headmaster at East Carnarvon described as 'hard core truants'.

Once the decision to establish an independent school was taken most of the organisational details were left to the European teacher. From the outset the scheme faced great difficulties, not the least of which were financial. When an independent school is established and classified by the State Education Department as 'efficient' it is eligible for recurrent grants from the Federal Government's Schools Commission. However, such funding is not available to establish a school. Consequently, the Reserve school was totally dependent upon a small cash payment made to it by the Koorda Club and miscellaneous donations of stationery and equipment. As there was no money available for staff salaries the European teacher, a second teacher, and one of the Reserve men agreed to work without pay until funds were available to pay them or to hire other teachers.

Another important handicap was the short period of time available between the decision to establish the school and the actual opening. As a result, the teachers primarily had to concern themselves with administrative matters. Limited time was available to be spent with the Reserve people on a mutual clarification of aims for the school, teaching methods to be employed, or the development of a comprehensive curriculum. For their part, the teachers aimed at providing a primary school education which would equip the children to compete on equal terms with non-Aboriginal children when they reached high school. This involved the provision of skills in reading, writing and mathematics but using the children's everyday experience and cultural background as a basis. The teachers also recognised 'the importance of knowledge of the wider community within which . . . (the children) will need to be able to operate' (Koorda Club 1977). They believed this knowledge was not adequately imparted in a conventional school setting and they planned to organise regular excursions into the wider community for that purpose. The emphasis in the school was to be on 'open learning' in the children's own 'non-threatening environment'. As the children had not had this type of educational experience in a school situation, the teachers thought that it would probably take the children at least a term to settle into the new system.

That the teachers did not have the time to develop a comprehensive curriculum in advance or to discuss their aims with the people led to a falling away of support for the project as it progressed. In the first place, the demand of the older people that traditional cultural values be emphasised was not really achieved. The people themselves had no experience in formal education and were not in a position to articulate to the teachers their general goals as specific learning objectives. The result of this was that one of the men taught the children traditional dancing and the making of artefacts but in a manner largely divorced of cultural context, thus falling far short of what the older people had envisioned.

An important area of disagreement which developed between the teachers and the people was with respect to the interrelated areas of the context of learning and discipline. The teachers believed that conventional approaches to education were unsuitable for teaching Aboriginal children in particular and intellectually stifling in general. In the Reserve school the teachers attempted to provide an 'open learning' situation and one in which the children could 'learn through play'. The Reserve people, on the other hand, had not the experience which led the teachers to be disillusioned with the education system 'per se'. The few older people disillusioned with the European system were so because it did not emphasize Aboriginal values, not because of the system as such. As indicated, there was a more general concern that school should act as a disciplinary institution and many of the parents thought that a school in their own community which they controlled would be more effective in this regard. Parents wanted their children to be in school, seated at a desk for six hours each day, working at the 'three Rs'. However, this was not what they got. What the teachers saw as 'learning through play' the parents saw only as play.

In addition to not being prepared for the problems of actually running a school, the people were not aware of the controversial nature of what they were doing and were not prepared for the opposition they encountered. When the school opened this opposition was both swift and vehement. The new headmaster at East Carnarvon Primary School who was still attempting to provide alternatives within his school told the parents he considered the move ill-advised. Officers from the Department of Community Welfare would not recognise the school and they advised the parents of guardians of a number of children who were state wards that the children were not permitted to attend the school. This reduced the number of pupils and caused their parents to become more qualified in their support for the school. This official opposition was joined by some of the more acculturated Aborigines from the town who criticised the school as being a return to the days of Aboriginal segregation. It appears that, in part, such people, having struggled hard for acceptance in the wider community, had accepted the ideology of assimilation and saw more overt expressions of self-determination among other Aboriginal groups as compromising their position. This broad opposition left the Reserve people bewildered.

Under these circumstances, the people's enthusiasm for the project was not sustained and by August it had almost completely waned. In that brief period the attitudes of the adults changed from unconditional support, to bewilderment and uneasiness and finally to abandonment of the scheme. Thus, when the headmaster from East Carnarvon Primary School addressed a meeting at the Reserve hall and presented a proposal to conduct a special class for some of the Reserve children at his school, the people accepted. At the end of its first term of operation the Reserve school closed and the children returned to East Carnarvon Primary School.

DISCUSSION

Aborigines on the Carnarvon Reserve had managed their own affairs for many years within the context of their dependent position within the wider society. Such self-management was largely pragmatic, not wrought into a formal idealogy, and did not often coincide with the ideals of non-Aboriginal Australians. However, the people had their own priorities and brought to bear their limited resources to achieve goals they deemed desirable. This was manifest in-among other things-a revival of traditional religion among them, a struggle over many years to have their living conditions improved and in the establishment of the Reserve school. (Gray 1977, 1978).

Aboriginal communities are often portrayed as being ideologically homogeneous. However, the situation described here illustrates a diversity of beliefs among the Reserve people with respect to the issue of education. The Reserve school did not grow out of a formal ideology of self-management held by the community as a whole. There were some who saw schooling as a potential vehicle for the reinforcement of traditional Aboriginal values. Others saw it as a means of disciplining children, keeping them out of trouble and, hence, minimizing unwelcome contacts with non-Aboriginal bureaucrats. As well as this there were people-mainly single young adults-who were not committed to any position but were prepared to go along with decisions made by those most directly affected. Despite the diversity, however, the people did decide upon a common course of action to manage the educational problems confronting them.

Having made the decision to act themselves, the people needed supporting in that decision. The Reserve people, like most Aboriginal communities, were economically dependent on the non-Aboriginal community, especially the public sector. Unlike some more affluent religious or ethnic minorities, they had neither the material resources nor the political power which accompanies those resources to establish a school independently. Under these circumstances, to bring the school to fruition the Reserve Mob needed the backing of governmental bureaucracy. However, this was not forthcoming. On the one hand, State Education Department had no policy of allowing Aborigines to determine their own educational needs. On the other, the Federal Government Department responsible for the policy of self-management-Aboriginal Affairs-took no action on the issue.

Lack of resources to effectively implement the decision to establish a school and the absence of support from governmental agencies took their toll on the attitudes of the people towards their school. When people talked about having their own school they generally imagined having a conventional school (such as the one at East Carnarvon, complete with teachers) placed on the Reserve for the exclusive use of their children. However, the financial aspects of the scheme were not really discussed or comprehended, although there was a general feeling, given the rhetoric about self-management, that some form of 'Government' assistance would be forthcoming. As the Reserve school did not have the financial resources with which to obtain a building and equipment, it lacked the tangible facilities which symbolised a school. That is, it appears that many people thought of a school in terms of a building, rather than as the processes which took place within the building. Because of that, the Reserve school did not appear to be a 'real' school; besides which, the children were obviously materially disadvantaged at the new school when compared to their previous situation. The people had wanted something which other Aboriginal groups in the town did not have but they also wanted something which would be looked upon with admiration by outsiders. In this respect a school in a bough shed became a source of embarrassment to them rather than a source of pride. This erosion of Mob support for the school was further exacerbated because of the different approaches of the people and the teachers with regard to the aims of the school.

At this point a disgression is in order to reflect upon the attitudes of the two non-Aborigines most involved in the episode. Depsite her close friendship with many of the Reserve people, the older non-Aboriginal teacher, once she had the initial support and mandate from the people, took its continuance for granted. The opposition to the scheme was voiced and the school ran into other difficulties, the people reconsidered their position. They wanted approval for the scheme outside their community, not rejection because of it. When the school began to run into difficulties the teacher was prepared to stand on principle and confront the critics. However, the principle for which she stood was no longer that of the Mob. This was also the case at the end when she was continuing to press for a school the Reserve people no longer wanted. For his part, the headmaster appeared to believe the Reserve people had never really wanted a separate school. He believed the teacher had established the school without the people's support and inexplicably the people had allowed their children to attend. That the teacher did not have the support of the Mob at the end was, for the headmaster, proof that she never had it. This reflects an implicitly racist view of Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relations. Certainly, Aborigines are influenced by the ideas of those people within the wider community with whom they come in contact. However, the criticism suggests that Aborigines do not have the faculties to evaluate the ideas and options and that they are sheep to be led by any opportunist who so desires.

Both these people, in fact, failed to recognise that the Reserve people like people anywhere may change their minds according to their evaluation of a particular situation. For those working among Aborigines there is an important lesson to be learned from this. Rather than getting involved in personal recriminations about who is 'right' about what the people want, non-Aboriginal advisors need to be much more in tune with the continual changes of opinion which occur in any community. Instead of attempting to force the people into the restrictive framework of opinions once, or presently, held community workers have to be as flexible as the people themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

No one would seriously suggest that in pre-contact times Aborigines had any problems in managing their own affairs. It is only in the context of colonisation and dependence that this has become an issue. Even in their present situation, Aborigines have not abdicated a desire to control their own affairs. Many writers, noting the dichotomy that Aborigines have made between 'blackfella' and 'whitefella' business, have indicated that Aborigines continue to effectively manage the former. It has often been assumed, however, that they have little or no interest in 'whitefella' business. We believe this is an over-simplification. It is useful to make a distinction between those issues in which Aborigines have no interest and those which they have decided they have little chance in influencing but would given a real opportunity. This case study and the recent upsurge in the establishment of Aboriginal community schools (Ruddock et. al. 1985) indicate that education clearly falls into the latter category of 'whitefella' business.

Self-management as formulated by politicians and bureaucrats is an imposed ideology. It is concerned with those issues falling into the domain of 'whitefella' business and which are of concern to non-Aborigines. It downplays or disregards Aboriginal initiatives in other areas of their lives and is divorced from that reality. Furthermore, it is a high level abstract idealogy which takes little or no account of the dependence of Aborigines on the wider community. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests largely with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The policy has not been systematically applied in areas outside the purview of DAA, and DAA lacks the power top influence other federal and state government departments to implement the policy. All of these factors compromise the effectiveness of the policy of self-management.

The attempt by the Carnarvon Reserve Mob to establish their own school failed largely because they did no have the resources to implement their decision. When they proceeded with the scheme in the face of this difficulty-despite the official policy of encouraging Aboriginal initiatives they received no support from those whose role was ostensibly to help them to become independent. This case study and the continuing plight of Aborigines, after more than ten years of self-determination/self-management, demonstrate that policy based on an ideology which fails to take account of social structural realities is bound to have only marginal effect.

Catherine Berndt has described current government policies towards Aborigines as 'the new paternalism' (1977:404). The policy of self-management requires that employees of DAA take a back seat and allow Aboriginal communities to make their own decisions. However, as Catherine Berndt goes on to say, 'Just because there is no non-Aboriginal authority figure in sight, that does not necessarily mean that none exists' (1977:405). As the present study illustrates, paternalism can be exercised through acts of omission as well as acts of commission. Under such circumstances, modified but essentially assimilationist policies continue 'more obliquely under the facade of self determination' (Berndt & Berndt 1977:ix).

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APPENDIX

MONDAY

PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — MONDAY SEPTEMBER 19th **12-1pm**
1. NICK THIEBERGER	**Language programmes for tradition or for today?**
2. PAUL BUSCHENHOFEN	**The Development of the Traditional Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at Noonkanbah.** A discussion on the development, purpose, structure and features of the TATE program.
3. DOREEN BEDFORD	**The Drover's Daughter.** A life story — from life in the outback to tertiary graduate.
4. LYN RILEY-MUNDINE	**Policies and Practices of Aboriginal Particpation in Higher Education.**
5. BARBARA SAYERS	**Teaching Reading to Traditionally Oriented Aboriginal Adults.** Discusses the implications of research into the learning styles, world view and cognitive development of traditionally oriented Aboriginal people for the teaching of reading to learn.
6. CHERI YAVU-KAMA PAT DUDGEON JENNIFER SABBIONI	**Empowerment Through Learning.**
7. ROBYN WILLIAMS GREGORIANA PARKER	**Sexuality and Reproductive Health for Aboriginal Health Workers. Teaching strategies/content used and developed in a workshop for senior women (A.H.W. in the E. Arnhem Region).**
8. ERIC HAYWARD	**A Practical Lesson — Adult Aboriginal Students, Hedland W.A.** A lecturer's change in teaching method and strategy to a more practical approach because of unsuccessful lessons.
9. MAY CHALKER WENDY BROWN	**Aboriginal Student's Success or Failure: Factors Affecting Adjustment to Tertiary Studies and Academic Achievement.** Based on preliminary research by the authors, this paper will address the issues of the "nanny syndrome" versus self responsibility; positive and negative self concepts and academic achievement.
10. JUDITH KEARINS	**Psychological Testing for Intelligence and for Employment.** "Intelligence" tests, unfair to many cultural groups, are now used little in the cross-cultural context. Testing for employment suitability has important differences, and may include necessary assessment for some jobs.
11. SONNY FLYNN	**Grass Roots Learning.**

PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — MONDAY SEPTEMBER 19th **2-3pm**
1. BARBARA SAYERS	**Aboriginal People Learning to Translate.**
2. ANNE-MARIE SMITH THELMA CARLISLE BARBARA McGILLVRAY	**Learning Our Way.** Two senior students will discuss their approach to learning and [illegible] group will try and draw conclusions for future learning.
3. HENRY HARPER	**The ALPA Co-operative and Family Operated Small Business.** The structure of the Arnhemland Progress Association: training philosophies and programs: family business training and operation.
4. ISAAC BROWN	**The Way Nyoongah People View Knowledge Conflicts with the Manner in which Wetjala Systems Present Knowledge, and this is compounded by the internalized victim status of Nyoongah experience.**
5. JOYCE NUDDING COONANA ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S GROUP	**Learning Our Way.**
6. ORIEL MURRAY	**Hedland College — Supporting Enclave.**
7. ISABELLE PROCTER	**Adult Aboriginal Literacy Skills and competencies depend on The Social Context.**
8. CORAL LAUGHTON MARILYN DAVIES SUE AH-CHEE	**Literacy Program.** A video production, teaching materials, and I.A.D. publications showing some aspects of the literacy course, will be included in the presentation.
9. FRAN CRAWFORD	**Aboriginal Knowledge: Does it Count?** A presentation and discussion of the difficulties of incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into Social Work curricula under Aboriginal control, with implications for tertiary studies generally.
10. SHERRY SAGGERS DENNIS GRAY	**Whose Ideology? Adult Aboriginal Attitudes to Education on the Carnarvon Aboriginal Reserve.** The paper examines the conflicting ideologies of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who attempted to establish an independent school on the Carnarvon Aboriginal Reserve.
11. JUDY BUTTERS	**Using the Skills in a Community to Promote Self Determination and Community Development.**
12. BARRY LENNARD	**Adult Education at Bayulu (Kimberley, W.A.).**

PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20th **11am-1pm** (NOTE: 2 hour or 1 hour sessions)
1. KATHY TRIMMER ROSE WHITEHURST TONY CALGARET SANDRA WOOLTORTON	**Nyungar Language Happenings in South West/Perth.** A description of the Nyungar languages courses held in Bunbury 1986 and Perth 1988. A brief description of the current project to produce a Nyungar language kit and our proposal for the Nyungar language and history recording project.
2. BARRY THORNE	**New Strategies for Aboriginal Teaching Pioneered by the Aboriginal Education Unit, T.A.F.E., NSW.** (Video "Change on Both Sides" documentary followed by a discussion session).
3. MICHAEL BREEN	**Productive Teaching and Learning For all Concerned.** Roles and behaviours which are productive for teachers and learners where Aboriginals and other are involved in a learning/training experience.
4. DAVID HIGGINS	**Alcohol Education for Aboriginal Offenders.** Presentation of the kit and a review of the methods involved in teaching Aboriginal Adult offenders.
5. SUSAN HOWARD	**Working with Aboriginal managers in remote communities learning communication skills.** Communication competencies as part of management competencies — identifying the skills and developing ways of learning these. An interactive session with examples.
*6. KARRAYILI ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE	**Community Based Adult Education in Fitzroy Crossing.** Discussion and outline of outstation movement around Fitzroy Crossing and the need for Adult Education.
*7. DARCY BOLTON	**A Special Research Project undertaken for the "Learning My Way" Conference.** Retention rates are good in Rockhampton.
*8. ROD BROADHURST	**Social Control, Learning and the Struggle for Law.** Explores some of the issues and problems arising from the interaction of Anglo-Australian law and Aboriginal society. Issues include the enlistment of Aboriginal people in law enforcement and the effects of this.
*9. ERNIE STRINGER	**Cross Cultural Curriculum Development. A Negotiated Curriculum.** This workshop describes a process for developing education and training programmes which are relevant to the needs of Aboriginal people.
*10. STEVE HAMMOND	**Making use of Student Organizations.** A look at student rights and avenues for student involvement within College and Guild structures.
*11. DARRYL KICKETT	**Aboriginal Values and Development.**

NOTE: These are one hour sessions.

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PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20th **11am-1pm**
*12. LISA BELLEAR	**University of Melbourne's Aboriginal Admissions Scheme and the Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy.**
*13. JOYCE HUDSON MONA CHUGUNA	**Learning Chuguna's Way.** A video presentation. Mona tells two stories for the children to teach them what life was like when she was young.
*14. DEBRA BENNET	**The Aboriginal Participation Initiative at Griffith University.**
*15. EILEEN CUMMINGS	**Another Step Forward. Aboriginal Education Needs.** Aboriginal learning and teaching skills in relation to conservation, preservation and management of land. "Rangers" etc.
*16. ANNE KOGOLO TONY McMAHON	**Training for Community Self-Management. A Case Study.** Aboriginal communities on Noonkanbah and Millijiddee stations in the Kimberley have been self-managing for many years. This paper considers what that means and how it works within the context of social and economic development.
*17. PHIL HERAUD	**Developing Maths/Science Bridging Programs for Kooris.** A discussion of my experiences arising from co-ordinating a tertiary oriented maths/science bridging program.
*18. JOHN SHERWOOD KEITH TRUSCOTT TOM BABAN	**"Working with Aborigines in Remote Areas" Presenting the new edition of this book.**
*19. SARAH YU	**Aboriginal Studies — Curriculum Materials.** Presenting a range of newly developed, regionally oriented curriculum materials for Aboriginal Studies, followed by discussion.

PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20th **3.30-4.30pm**
1.	LANGUAGE MEETING
2. KALIANI TAUKENA	**Fiji — A Multi-racial Society. A Pacific Identity — Our Culture.**
3. PAUL ANDERSON	**Developments in Aboriginal and Islander Electoral Education.** The Australian Electoral Commission has conducted an Aboriginal (and recently Islander) electoral education programme for 9 years. The presentation covers development in both delivery and educational materials during this period.
4. ANTHEA TAYLOR	**Off-Campus Teacher Training — A Way of Life.** A description of problematic learning and teaching areas and points of pressure for Aboriginal tertiary students.
5. SHIRLEY BENNELL	**Nyungar Women Returning to Education.** This paper is based upon the experiences of Nyungah women in Bunbury, W.A. who have returned to formal education.
6. CHRISTINE McCONIGLEY	**The Family — Our Greatest Untapped Resource.** Ways to focus on parents as supporters of and contributors to their child's education.
7. ROSE MURRAY	**The Role of Tertiary Education for Aborigines.** Ideas, views and discussion about the present and future roles. Our accountability to family, community and employers will be addressed.
8. M VAZEY	**Adaptations Made at ESCO TAFE.**
9. DENNIS TAYLOR CHERYLE TAYLOR LYALL GARLETT	**Home and Away.** Setting up and running a student housing corporation.
10. TAS BEDFORD	**Meeting Aboriginal Requirements in Designing Formal Courses — Are Western Ideas About Adult Learning of Any Use?**
11. PAT DUDGEON DARLENE OXENHAM	**Another Perspective on Aboriginal Identity.**

PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21st 11am-12pm
1. ROBERT CAPP	**Even Desert Kids Need Heroes.**
2. GWEN BUCKNALL	**Aboriginal Adult Learning: Meeting a Diversity of Needs.** Informal discussion following presentation of ideas.
4. PETER McGLEW	**Aboriginal Ranger Training in National Parks.** History, philosophy and outcomes of training local Aboriginal people in National Park Management.
5. DAVID TREAGUST PETER TAYLOR JOHN MALONE	**Bridging Aborigines into Tertiary Maths and Science Relation Courses:** A Curriculum Project. (includes a display of S.M.E.C. materials.)
6. YARRIE STUDENT GROUP, HEDLAND COLLEGE W.A.	Aboriginal Education Difficulties in the Pilbara.
7a. BARBARA SAYERS	**Learning Processes Observed at an Aboriginal Songwriters Workshop.** (verbal presentation supported by audio cassette, booklet and video clips.)
7b. CLARE MANN	**Aboriginal Men Produce their Own Literature in Prisons.** A book publishing project.
8. ABORIGINAL STUDIES PROJECT TEAM, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WA.	**Aboriginal Studies: Learning to Live Together — a Study Programme for all Australians.**
9. DOUG HUBBLE NORMA MORRISON BARBARA HARVEY	**Pre-Tertiary Studies for Aborigines in an External Mode.** History, curriculum and organisation of the W.A.C.A.E. programme.
10. GAVAN FLICK	**Tranby Aboriginal College.**
11. RALPH FOLDS	**Adult Education at the Cross Roads. Reproducing the Present or Choosing the Future.** This paper examines the relationship between community development in the third world and Aboriginal communities and models of education and training.
12. PAT DUDGEON	**Self Esteem, Aboriginal Students.**

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	PRESENTER/S	WORKSHOPS/PAPERS — WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21st **12am-1pm**
1.		LANGUAGE PAPER
2.	MERLE O'DONNELL BRAD SIMPSON	
3.	BARBARA SAYERS	**Left or Right Brain: Is There a Neurological Relationship to Aboriginal Learning Styles?** — An anecdotal presentation which shows the relationship of the incidents cited to what is usually described as the activity of the right brain.
4.	PRISON EDUCATION GROUP. DEPT. OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES, W.A.	**Learning in W.A. Prisons: Education Programmes and Problems.** A report on programmes for Aborigines. Information sharing from other states.
5.	DOT HENRY	**Needs of Children in Institutions.**
6.	ACCESS TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES (A.A.C.S.) GROUP, GERALDTON, W.A.	**The Dynamics of Aboriginal Group Learning:** Group learning in a spontaneous situation — the security of learning in a small family unit with the support it provides.
7.	WILLIAM VINCENT	**Aboriginal Education Workers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers Access to Education and Training in W.A.** A pilot programme that enables A.E.W.s and A.L.O.s to work towards a Diploma of Teaching while remaining in the community and schools.
8.	DELORES ROE	**Teaching Styles for Aboriginal Adults.**
9.	BRYN ROBERTS	**Aborigines in Business.** A Workshop session to give you an idea of how to get into your own business and be your own boss.
10.	MAR MOODITJ HEALTH WORKERS	**Health Education — A Way of Life.**

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